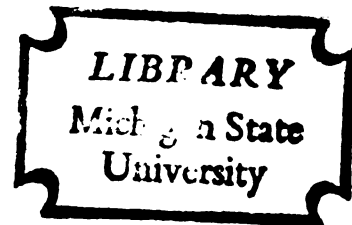


A STUDY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
IN THE EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING  
PROCESS AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS  
FROM A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
NEIGHBORHOOD

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
GEORGE DEWEY HARRIS JR.  
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This is to certify that the  
thesis entitled  
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BY PARENTS FROM A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEIGHBORHOOD

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GEORGE DEWEY HARRIS JR.

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## ABSTRACT

### A STUDY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AS PERCEIVED BY PARENTS FROM A LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEIGHBORHOOD

By

George Dewey Harris Jr.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the degree of communication that exists between the residents of a lower socio-economic community and the neighborhood elementary school which their children attend. A structured interview was conducted with a representative sample of the population in order to determine the extent and quality of communication between the lay citizens of the community and the school, and the efficacy of the various systems through which lay citizens presently influence educational policy. Another purpose of the interview was to identify areas of lay citizen interest and, subsequently, to develop a structure designed to broaden the existing channels of communication between the professional educators and lay citizens of the community being examined.

Methodology. The source of data reported in this study consists of a measurement of the degree of participatory and communicatory interaction that existed between a neighborhood school, which is located in a lower socioeconomic community, and the parents of children attending that school. Information relating to this relationship was gathered by interviewing a randomly selected sample of parents of children attending Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School in New Haven, Connecticut. During the course of the interview, each respondent was asked to answer questions which were designed to measure his attitude towards the school, the extent of his participation in school activities, the degree of factual knowledge the respondent possessed concerning the operation of the school, and the efficacy of the media through which he learned about the school's programs. The interviews and questionnaires were administered to the participants by two experienced interviewers during the period November 6, 1969 and January 18, 1970.

Major Findings. This investigation reveals an increasing need for better school-community communication techniques and suggests some implications of change for the traditional public school system. One of the most direct implications inherent in the changing educational scene is that of the relationship between professional



educators at the school unit level and the lay citizens of that community.

The data indicated that, generally there is very little agreement between professional educators and lay citizens about the assumption of complete responsibility by either group for selected educational tasks. Professional educators and lay citizens alike indicated that they favored a sharing of responsibility for most educational tasks. Teachers and parents both agreed that the technical aspects of teaching should be left to the discretion of the professional educators. Lay citizens indicated conclusively that they were more concerned about the establishment and shaping of educational policy than with the specifics of classroom activity. They also indicated a desire to be involved in varying degrees in all dimensions of the educational process.

The study revealed a significant positive relationship existing between the degree of participation exhibited by the respondents in the sample population and their socio-economic status. That is to say, those individuals who were most likely to participate in the school's programs were usually from a higher socio-economic strata, exhibited a general interest in education, had had more positive contacts with the school, and generally communicated through a wider range of media. Also, those

individuals expressed a greater desire to participate in formulating educational policy and were more likely to be the ones in the community who strongly disapproved of the educational decision-making process employed by the public school system.

The data gathered from this study also revealed the existence of a significant positive correlation between the extent of respondent contact with the school and the degree of information he possessed concerning the school's programs. Correspondingly, the more information the individual possessed concerning the school program, the more interest he manifested toward the educational program. These findings generally suggested that a better informed community is usually more interested in its schools and is more likely to become involved in its educational programs. A variety of media was employed by professional educators in their attempt to communicate with the lay citizens of the community. The data gathered in carrying out the research for this study strongly suggest that face-to-face or direct verbal contacts were the most effective means of communication.

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By

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## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

The current social phenomenon, the desire for personal autonomy, is one of the greatest forces of contemporary times--ranking with poverty, war, and the atomic age. It springs from man's basic desire to be fully human, dignified, and served by his institutions rather than enslaved by them. Its basic characteristics are revealed when larger, more complex institutions and bureaucracies become necessary to sustain an even larger and more complex society.

Many educators, social scientists, and contemporary philosophers are giving attention to this issue. Earl Kelly in his In Defense of Youth reveals the attempt of youth to retain its sense of individuality. Paul Goodman in Growing Up Absurd reveals the tragedy of society's placing the organized system above "human nature." Michael Harrington in The Other America speaks of large segments of our society having no control over their destiny. These writings reflect the concerns of some of



the thinkers in the educational profession. Concern for these issues should be just as important for the doers in the educational profession as for the thinkers.

### Significance of the Problem

Teachers of the poor rarely live in the community where they work and sometimes have little sympathy for the life styles of their students. Moreover, the growth and complexity of the administration of large urban school systems has compromised the accountability of the local schools to the communities which they serve and reduces the ability of parents to influence decisions affecting the education of their children, communication has broken down, and parents are distrustful of officials responsible for formulating educational policy.<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .  
In an atmosphere of hostility between the community and the schools, education cannot flourish. A basic problem stems from the isolation of the schools from other social forces influencing youth. Changes in society--mass media, family structure, religion, have radically altered the role of the school. New links must be built between the schools and the communities they serve. The schools must relate to the broader system which influences and educates ghetto youth. Expansion of opportunities for community and parental participation in the school system is essential to the successful functioning of inner-city schools.<sup>2</sup>

Mario Fantini and Marilyn Gittell in describing the rationale for the New York decentralization experiment states:

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, U.S. Riot Commission Report, Otto Kerner, chairman (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), pp. 436-437.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 440.

Desegregation and compensatory education were not working and new options in educational reform were necessary. Direct community participation was to be an essential ingredient. . . . This implied that participation was essential for learning and growth of children in the schools and to the adults in the community.<sup>1</sup>

If the above quotations are valid observations and recommendations in light of the present state of our public schools, then perhaps they can serve as a bench mark or anchor point from which educators can begin to reorganize the educational system making it more relevant to all members of society.

Much of the current research and educational literature suggests that urban education can be enhanced by more active participation of parents in the decision-making processes of our educational systems. Just how they may be actively involved is the purpose of this study.

There are three specific problems to be explored in this study. (1) To what extent do parents from lower socio-economic levels communicate with professional educators and the school? (2) To what extent do parents from lower socio-economic levels participate in the decision-making process of policies that affect their children? (3) What techniques can be employed by

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<sup>1</sup>Mario Fantini and Marilyn Gittell, "The Ocean Hill-Brownsville Experiment," Phi Delta Kappan, L, No. 8 (1969), p. 442.



professional educators and the school to broaden the areas of communication?

### Background and Research

Studies have been conducted which attempt to substantiate many of the assumptions to be drawn for this study. Whitney M. Young Jr. stated in a nationally syndicated newspaper editorial:

Among the many trials and tribulations Americans have to bear are the armies of researchers who periodically invade the ghetto to study how black people live.

Many of these studies are useful. They help to define problem areas and gather the kinds of statistics and personal stories that become ammunition for urging basic changes--but there are many other research programs which are concerned primarily with emphasizing the pathology of the ghetto or supposed inherent inferiority of black people.<sup>1</sup>

The Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, released in 1966, gives a view of socially directed violence--what underlies it, what sets it off, how it runs its course and what follows it. The study posits that the people who are isolated and powerless to influence the course of their destiny have a desire to destroy the system.

Berelson and Stienner in their study of human behavior state:

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<sup>1</sup>Whitney M. Young Jr., "Ghetto Studies Called Useless in Many Cases," Flint Journal, June 15, 1969.

Frustration is not an easy condition for human beings to tolerate. When people are frustrated, their behavior often reverts to earlier and less adaptive modes and even shows general deterioration.<sup>1</sup>

Other research has shown that inner-city parents want to become involved in the educative process and generally desire good education for their children. These parents in general want better things for their children than they had themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The Adams-Morgan Community School Project in Washington, D.C., gives evidence that when parents have a voice in establishing policy in their schools, children achieve more. It is one of the few schools in Washington where pupils' scores on standardized tests rose markedly after the first year of its program. Habitual truants were reported to be back at their desks and vandalism was reported to be at a new low. It is clear that the school is now an integral part of the community.<sup>3</sup>

TheodoreSizer interprets another well known study--New York City's Decentralization plan--as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Stiener, Human Behavior (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), pp. 11-15.

<sup>3</sup>Letter to Editor, Adams Morgan School, Harvard Educational Review, XXXIX (Winter, 1969), p. 161.

The group with which the key power should rest, the panel concludes, is parents. "Parents can be trusted to care more than anyone for the quality of the education their children get. . . ."

. . . . .  
To provide them with power--a considerable portion of the control of education--the panel recommends "a liberating decentralization, a means of reconnecting the parties at interest so that they can work in concern. . . ."1

Many of these studies conclude that when a parent sees that his school respects him as a person and allows him to make his voice heard, sees that his school's teachers and administrators believe in his children's potential to seek and develop their skills, sees his school as a viable, vital and integral part of his neighborhood, is made to feel that he can exhibit some degree of control over his environment, he will then develop a sense of importance and eventually exercise a greater degree of participation in the activities of his school.

However, there are two sides to this problem. The degree of lay citizen participation in educational policy matters is a moot question for professional educators and parents from the lower socio-economic level. Teachers are quite definite about the areas of school operation which

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore R.Sizer, "Reconnection for Learning: A Community School System for New York," Harvard Educational Review, XXXVIII (Winter, 1968), pp. 177, 178.



are suitable for parent participation and those which should be entirely the school's responsibility.

On the other hand, parents, especially many of those in the larger urban communities, feel that they should have autonomous authority in controlling the schools. As emphatically stated by a parent group in Detroit:

We, citizens of the black community of Detroit, fully conscious of the fact that our children are not receiving a decent education, viewing the increasing deterioration in the educational situation in this city, and after innumerable presentations of our grievances to the Board of Education to no avail, have finally come to the conclusion that Community Control of the Schools is the only way to establish real accountability of the school system of the Black Community.

We further wish to make it clear that we know "Decentralization" is not the same as "Community Control of Schools." Community Control of Schools means the right of local governing boards, elected by the community, to control the budget, hire and dismiss teachers and administrators, and determine curriculum.

It is these rights which we are determined to secure for the sake of ourselves and our posterity.<sup>1</sup>

The following question comes from a recent Teacher Opinion Poll which asked a nationwide sample of public school classroom teachers this question:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Chances for Change for Black Children (Brochure. Detroit: Citizens for Community Control of Schools, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>N.E.A. Research Division, "Teacher Opinion Poll," The Journal of the National Education Association (December, 1968), p. 7.

Do you believe that a representative group of parents from the school neighborhood should have full responsibility, responsibility shared with the school administration, or no official responsibility for the operation of the particular school their children attend?

A list of different aspects of school operation followed so that respondents might indicate their opinions about the degree of parental involvement in the planning and supervision of extra curricular activities; but in such matters as school staffing or decisions about methods and materials or teaching, most teachers said parents should not be involved.

In general, the survey found that teachers believe that schools should be responsive to community views about the educational program.

The survey also revealed that the opinions of urban teachers differed only slightly from those of their suburban and rural counterparts as to which areas of school operations are suitable for parent participation.<sup>1</sup>

Literature relative to the specific objectives of this study is sparse. It is hoped that this study will provide baseline descriptive data for the organizational patterns of inner-city schools which can lead to maximum constructive participation of inner-city parents.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

### Research Hypothesis

#### Hypothesis 1:

A positive correlation exists between social status and the degree of respondent participation in neighborhood school programs.

#### Hypothesis 2:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in public school programs and the degree of interest and satisfaction developed toward neighborhood school programs.

#### Hypothesis 3:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation and the amount of factual knowledge he possesses concerning the public school programs.

#### Hypothesis 4:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in public school programs and his attitudes toward the decision-making process employed by the school officials.

#### Hypothesis 5:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in the public school programs and the amount of communication he receives.

**Hypothesis 6:**

A positive correlation exists between the degree of information possessed by the respondent and the extent of personal interest he manifests toward the educational system.

**Operational Definitions**

For purposes of clarification the following terms to be used in this study will be defined in the following manner as they relate to the discussion, implementation and interpretation of the study.

**Decentralization:** The process of reducing large school systems into smaller units for more efficient control by the administration of the school system.

**Local Control:** That authority given the sovereign states and municipalities by the United States Constitution to provide public education for their constituents.

**Community Control:** The assumption of legal responsibility by the lay citizens of the community for the operation of the educational programs in their neighborhood schools.

**Professional Educator:** A person who has formally acquired special technical skills or knowledge about the educational process; benefits derived from the utilization of these skills are the source of his livelihood.



School-Community: This term identifies the geographical area which is limited by the residences of school enrollees with the designated school district boundaries.

Communication: A transmitting, a giving or giving and receiving of information, signals, or messages by talk, gestures, writing, etc.<sup>1</sup>

Lay Citizens: A person not possessing the technical knowledge or skills of the professional educator and who is not serving as a member of the public school staff or as a school board member.

Social Status: (a) The standing of a category of people as defined by objective advantages or disadvantages, (b) the prevailing subjective "evaluation" of a category in the community, and (c) the power of a given stratum to enforce its demands.<sup>2</sup>

### Assumptions

What we do about a persisting social problem, such as the problem of achieving meaningful citizen participation in the decision-making processes of the

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1966), p. 294.

<sup>2</sup>Tamotsy Shibutani and Kwan M. Kian, Ethnic Stratification (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 38.

school, depends in large part on our assumptions about the forces that produce it.

Every approach to this problem is based on certain assumptions, explicit or implicit, about why the problem the approach is seeking to solve exists in the first place. This study will attempt to set forth some ideas which may be helpful in dealing with the problems emanating from lack of citizen participation in the decision-making processes of the public schools.

1. Parents should be involved in the work of the schools in such a way that they can understand the importance of education in contemporary society, and in so doing, they may provide support and reinforcement for the educational objectives of the school.
2. The solution to many of the problems that confront public school education in the inner-city may be improved by the joint efforts of lay citizenry from the lower socio-economic strata and professional educators.
3. "Increased citizen participation in the decision-making process of the schools is not only essential but inevitable."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard L. Featherstone, "Urban Schooling," in Reorganizing the Control Patterns in Urban Schools, ed. by Herbert C. Rudman and Richard L. Featherstone (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1968), pp. 73-74.

4. Objective analysis of data collected from this study may provide the basis of a design for a school/community interaction system with greater potential for successful implementation.
5. The greatest demand for increased citizen participation in the decision-making processes of the schools presently emanates from the disenfranchised black citizens of our country.

#### Population and Sample to be Used

The sample (N = 50) selected for this study will be from parents of children attending an inner-city elementary school of which the majority is black and whose families have low incomes.

Poverty in the affluent society is more than absolute deprivation. Many of the poor in the United States would be well-off in other societies. Relative deprivation--inequality--is a more useful concept of poverty with respect to the Negro in America because it encompasses social and political exclusion as well as economic inequality.<sup>1</sup>

#### Procedure

A structured questionnaire will be administered to parents of an inner-city elementary school. The questionnaire is designed to assess the effectiveness of communication attempted by the public school officials, the parents'

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, U.S. Riot Commission Report, op. cit., p. 258.

perception of the degree of their participation in running the schools and their attitudes towards the public schools. The data will be analyzed to determine:

1. To what extent parents of lower socio-economic levels share or want to share in establishing and modifying the educational decision-making process affecting their children.
2. To attempt to identify factors which promote and/or prohibit their participation.
3. To suggest ways in which educators can create meaningful and effective participation of these parents in the educative process of their children.

### Summary and Overview

The implementation of a method for constructive involvement of citizens in the educational decision-making process has been suggested by some educational authorities as being one of the most crucial problems facing educators today. The task of developing procedures for sharing educational responsibility with lay citizenry, especially those from the lower classes, has thwarted the efforts of some of our best educational leaders.

A questionnaire will be developed and administered which will attempt to measure the effectiveness of the

communication which has been attempted between a selected school and its constituency. The concluding chapter will present findings, conclusions and recommendations based upon the research findings.

The format of the study will be as follows:

CHAPTER II.   SELECTED REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

- A.   History of citizen participation in public education.
- B.   The current question of citizen participation and control of public education.
- C.   Review of selected alternate designs for citizen participation in the operation of the public schools.

CHAPTER III.   PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THE SURVEY

CHAPTER IV.   ANALYZING THE DATA COLLECTED AND THE ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS SUGGESTED BY THE FINDINGS.

CHAPTER V.   PRESENT FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

## CHAPTER II

### SELECTED REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature is primarily directed at the following areas:

1. The establishment and control of public educational systems in America.
2. The current question of citizen participation and control of public education.
3. Selected review of alternate designs to facilitate citizen participation in the decision-making processes of the public schools.

#### Introduction

The present concern for increased citizen participation is not directed at the educational institution alone. It is a question that is currently taxing the minds of the professional leadership in many social and civic spheres of contemporary society. Nor is concern for the "correct mix" of professional and lay interaction new. The question of "correct mix" for citizen participation in the educational decision-making process has been catapulted

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into a priority position of concern for professional educators by such issues as New York's experimental "Ocean Hill-Brownsville" program, the Adams-Morgan Decentralization Project, and other similar decentralization proposals currently being implemented throughout the country.

### The Establishment and Control of Public Educational Systems in America

#### The Colonial Period

The American Revolution was part of a revolution throughout the western world against conservatism. In America it meant the realization that American conditions demanded indigenous institutions. The institutions imported from Europe were not suited for the American scene. They came about because the entire social and cultural life of America was changing.<sup>1</sup>

Many New England town governments were formulated before the colonists left England. A good example is the town of Dorchester, Massachusetts, which was organized (March 20, 1630) in Plymouth, England, when its people were on the point of embarkation for America.

The town's civic and ecclesiastical organization was well established before its members landed in America.

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<sup>1</sup>Harry G. Good, A History of American Education (2nd ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1962), pp. 3-45.





As in most New England towns, the local town organizations came to monopolize almost all ordinary governmental powers. The counties to which the towns belonged exercised judicial authority, not political--that is, the towns observed common judicial laws but not governmental structure. In annual town meetings and in special meetings called from time to time the free men exercised, without any formal grant of powers or restrictions, the powers of self taxation, of expenditure of monies collected by taxation, and complete local self-government.<sup>1</sup>

The form of government originally established by the colonists is extremely significant to the problems being experienced in education today. Johnson states:

In political work the colonies had been very successful. They had built up thirteen distinct political units, representative democracies so simple and natural in their political structure that time has hardly changed the essential nature of the American State governments. In so doing the Americans were really laying the foundations of the future national structure, for there is hardly a successful feature in the present national government which was not derived or directly copied from the original colonial growth.<sup>2</sup>

### Social Conditions

The social circumstances brought about by the ecological distribution of the colonists had a direct

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Johnson, "United States History and Constitution," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 9th ed., XXIII, p. 731.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 733.

influence on the quantity and quality of existing educational opportunities.

The agrarian economy of the southern and middle colonies enabled them to produce an abundance of the necessities of life. They were able to export their superfluous produce to Europe and to the northern colonies.<sup>1</sup>

A wealthy elite society developed. Its members sought many of the refinements of life, including an education. Their personal wealth enabled the better classes to receive an education on a very high order (usually in England); and they in turn, by virtue of their expanded knowledge, helped to provide education for those less economically fortunate or unable to travel abroad.

In New England, education was more general even though it did not have the advantage of wealth as in the South. This was due to the fact that the first immigrations into New England contained an unusually large proportion of English university men, particularly among the ministers who contributed to the educational fabric being woven in our country at that time. During this period, two of the leading colleges in the country were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 732.

founded in New England: Harvard College in Massachusetts (founded in 1636) and Yale College in Connecticut (1701).<sup>1</sup>

Public education in New England was generally supported by both tuition fees and some public funds and was under nominal public control.

In addition to the private schools of early eighteenth century were private teachers employed by families to teach children, schools supported by local societies, many private secondary schools in cities, and mathematical and English schools to train boys for business and trades. Some schools were conducted after working hours for apprentices. Girls were frequently given instruction in some of these schools in subjects of English grammar, modern language, bookkeeping, and needlework.<sup>2</sup>

The conversion of former colonies into "States" followed hard upon the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. The transformation put the newly formed states in a position where they held all the real powers of government. The state legislature was supreme in all subjects relating to jurisdiction with two exceptions:

The constitution reserved to the states and to the people all powers not delegated to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 732.

<sup>2</sup>S. E. Frost Jr., Essentials of History of Education (New York: Baron's Educational Series, 1947), p. 147.

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United States by the constitution nor prohibited by the states.<sup>1</sup>

With these exceptions, it is difficult to imagine a more complete autonomy than is possessed by the states of the American Union. They control the organization of the state into counties, towns and cities. Although the constitution contains no reference to education, the first and tenth amendments assures control and the secularization of public education by the states.

While free school systems were developing throughout the western world during the nineteenth century, those in the United States took a different form. Frost states:

The schools were more sensitive to popular demand; social class distinctions were largely abolished; the teaching of religion in the schools was banned; a large number of pupils had access to higher levels of education; the American plan of control kept the schools close to the people, and there was no national system of education, but [50] different systems.<sup>2</sup>

### Thomas Jefferson's Influence

Thomas Jefferson thought of public education in terms of the needs for a republic.<sup>3</sup> Jefferson entered the

<sup>1</sup>George M. Johnson, Education Law (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Frost, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>3</sup>James B. Conant, Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Public Education (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1962), pp. 1-64.

Virginia Assembly as a legislator on October 7, 1776. Virginia had adopted a constitution but had not formulated its governmental structure or code of laws. Jefferson assumed responsibility for drafting a plan for the educational system of Virginia. This plan contained what Jefferson considered to be the best system to educate the people in a republic.

Jefferson believed the control of schools should rest with the "ward," an area of approximately five or six miles square but smaller than a county. Jefferson consistently espoused the advantages of decentralization for all forms of government and the sovereignty of the individual states. He proposed that the communities too poor to establish and support a public school receive aid from county funds. Decentralization, localization of financial responsibility for, as well as control of schools, was the backbone of Jefferson's philosophy of organization and administration. It became the accepted pattern in this country, complementing the township form of administrative government that had taken hold in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Jefferson exhibited exceptional organizational abilities. The present organizational patterns of our schools today owe much to the influence of Jefferson's original proposal. For example, Jefferson demonstrated

that if the principle of local control and support of schools established by the state were accepted, then the over-all organizational structure would be facilitated. In his organization he recommended that the state be divided into manageable school districts.<sup>1</sup>

The county judge was to appoint the visitors for supervision of primaries. The boards of public instruction of the colleges (high schools) were examples of a trend in the organization (and administration) of public education that emerged in the eighteenth century and came to be the classic form of school organization throughout the United States. Its essence and principles were simple. The state was to have ultimate authority in educational affairs and the management of the schools were to be delegated to the counties and lesser geographical units which were to see the appointment of laymen personally responsible to the interests of the state and public. Today, our public and private schools have lay school boards, an outgrowth of eighteenth century exponents which had the citizens oversee the work of the schools. . . . But the legal authority still resides where it was placed in the eighteenth century . . . in the state government which provides the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Holmes Beck, A Social History of Education (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 84-88.



legal framework within which the lay boards consider policy.<sup>1</sup>

While education is not mentioned in the United States Constitution, which reserves to the states all powers not expressly granted to the Federal Government, the government has assisted education none the less, relying on the clause that gives it the power to promote the general welfare. From a legal point of view, there is no such thing as American education--there is education in America.

Between the Federal and State Governments, State laws on education take precedence, except where they conflict with the Constitution. For example, no state may pass a law that violates the provision of the Fourteenth Amendment which states that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process, and no state may deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.<sup>2</sup>

The respect and influence that Jefferson earned as a politician enabled him to influence profoundly the American education system. For several generations after his death, his political aversion to centralized

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Albert P. Blaustein and Clarence C. Ferguson Jr., Segregation and the Law (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1957), pp. 54-64.

government continued to impede the formation of a closer relationship between the federal government and state authorities in improving the schools. Today there are some 40,000 independent school boards, a direct result of his efforts to establish local control of public schools. Jefferson's dream of education for Americans envisaged local schools, locally controlled and supported largely by local taxes.<sup>1</sup>

### The Establishment of State Systems

Resulting state constitutions directed their legislatures to establish systems patterned after Jefferson's design. Although many of the earlier state constitutions omitted the subject or spoke in vague generalizations, later ones became more explicit in defining the educational structure. It was not considered sufficient to merely order the formation of public school system.<sup>2</sup>

State educational systems evolved by trial and error process and are the result of constitutional and legislative provisions. First the colonies and later the states were independent, and as a result, so were their educational systems. This is what makes the American

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<sup>1</sup>Conant, op. cit., pp. 1-64.

<sup>2</sup>Good, op. cit., pp. 134-168.

educational organization unique. The "reserved powers" clause of the federal constitution insures this independence.<sup>1</sup>

The variety of state systems is increased by the economic and population differences between the individual states as well as various sections of the country. The most significant regional difference in public school systems had been the legal separation of black and white pupils in Southern schools. Many Northern cities also maintained peculiar educational systems that legally required the segregation of pupils by race.

Hickey reports:

Early school segregation was not legislated, rather it developed by practice. Some states established laws which permitted segregated schools. New York's permissive legislation was passed in 1841. Ohio was the first Northern State to exclude Negroes by law. This legislation was enacted in 1829 and was not followed by permissive legislation to allow for any Negro education until 1849.<sup>2</sup>

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It is interesting to note that while the North was openly condemning the South for slavery, segregated education was already an innovation of the North. Segregation was the rule from the 1830's until well after the Civil War. The large cities--New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Providence, New Haven--all held firmly to school segregation. Only in Maine, New Hampshire and

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Howard W. Hickey, "Development of Criteria for Evaluation Alternative Patterns to Reduce School Segregation in the Inner-City" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1968), p. 19.

Vermont did legal segregation not develop. It was not until the 1860's that Rhode Island and Connecticut abolished segregation. Michigan outlawed it in 1867.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Supreme Court's decision in the Brown vs. Board of Education case on May 17, 1954, rendered the practice of State maintenance of school systems which segregated pupils on the basis of race as unconstitutional and in direct violation of the fourteenth amendment of the federal constitution.

It is important to know that the states can control the local school boards if the state legislature opts to do so. The school units, the cities, townships and districts are responsible to the state and derive all their powers from it. It is equally important to know that when individuals or groups argue for local autonomy in school matters and demand that the schools be returned to the people, it can only be done by legislation passed by the state legislature or authority delegated by it to the local school district to control its own affairs.

Johnson states:

Education in the United States began as a local activity and although today the state has the final responsibility for the development of education within its borders--and local school boards are agencies of the state and not the local communities--the direct management of elementary and public high schools has to a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

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large extent been made the responsibility of local school districts. In recognition of this responsibility, the legislatures in most states provide for the participation of the residents of the district, in school district matters. . . . "Such participation does not give residents of the districts any constitutional right to participate."<sup>1</sup>

Local school districts are also state agencies and as such as subject to the plenary power of state legislatures. Local school boards are usually the governing body of the local system. Being subordinate state agencies, local school boards can only exercise those powers delegated to them by the state legislature. However, they usually have the latitude that can be reasonably implied from the authority expressly granted.

The government of American education makes it vulnerable to pressure applied by any group in the community--no matter how small--that is vocal and active enough to make a scene.

Public education is under the control of the various state governments, which delegate much of their power with regard to public schools to the 40,000 school boards that are locally elected.<sup>2</sup> Subject to the laws of the states, which usually give some power to the State Board of Education and its executive officer, local boards

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>Conant, op. cit., p. 10.



determine the personnel, the salaries, the course of study and all other questions facing the school. The theory is that education is first a state matter and then a local matter.

The Current Question of Citizen Participation  
and Control of Public Schools

In presenting the circumstances that have led to the formation of our educational system the writer has attempted to explore the origination and legitimization of educational authority. This section of the chapter will deal with the moral and democratic dimensions of educational authority in contemporary society.

De Tocqueville states:

In America, the people appoint the executive power and furnish the jurors who punish all infractions of the laws. The institutions are democratic, not only in their principle, but in all their consequences; and the people elect their representatives directly--and for the most part annually--in order to insure their independence. The people are therefore, the real directing power; and although the form of government is representative, it is evident that the opinions, the prejudices, the interests and even passions of the people are hindered by no permanent obstacles from exercising a perpetual influence on the daily conduct of affairs. In the United States, the majority governs in the name of the people as in the case in all countries in which the people are supreme. . . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, ed. by Andrew Hecker (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1964), p. 61.



De Tocqueville's writings in 1831 on American politics and society are considered by American historians, sociologists, and political scientists to be among the best treatises on the subject. His observations concerning our attitudes and form of government are, in many instances, as true today as they were in the early nineteenth century when he wrote them.

Gist and Fava conclude that the school (as an institution) is not something outside of--nor apart from--the community. The quality of the relationship between an institution and its constituents is determined in large measure by the extent of effective interaction achieved between the two. An effort to see the relationships that exist between the school and community or to delineate the channels of interaction is not always simple, due to the many informal structures. It is frequently necessary to understand a community's entire structure or "life style" before one can develop an understanding of how things get done. They further state that in communities which are highly organized or structured, the machinery for the co-ordination and interaction of its institutions is more apparent. A brief analysis of a community may or may not reveal whether the machinery is working effectively. The fact that community councils or P.T.A.'s exist is no assurance that effective communication

is transpiring between the various agencies or groups involved; the degree of interaction and the quality of communication among them may differ widely. Very often in a stable community the patterns of life are well established and the roles of the agencies or groups are well defined. On the other hand, a community which may be undergoing rapid transition may experience a condition of open conflict which mandates an organized effort to bring about community interaction and understanding.<sup>1</sup>

A typical political phenomenon in America is the pressure group. Since the local school boards are in a sense political (appointed or elected), they usually acknowledge the group that can exert pressure in the most effective way.

Wirth says:

Being reduced to a stage of virtual impotence as an individual, the individual is bound to exert himself by joining with others of similar interests into organized groups to obtain his ends. . . . "Self-government either in the economic, the political or cultural realm is under these circumstances reduced to a mere figure of speech or at best is subject to the unstable equilibrium of pressure groups."<sup>2</sup>

The ordinary parent tends to leave the field to the pressure group, especially in large cities; he is

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<sup>1</sup>Noel P. Gist and Sylvia F. Fava, Urban Society (5th ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 337-351.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology, XLIV (July, 1938), pp. 22-23.

busy and often feels too helpless to take any active part in the management of the schools or even inform himself about them. Wirth goes on to say:

Since for most group purposes it is impossible in the city to appeal individually to the large number of discrete and differentiated individuals, and since it is only through the organizations to which men belong that their interests and resources can be enlisted for a collected cause, it may be inferred that social control in the city should typically proceed through formally organized groups. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The pressure groups labor under no such disadvantages. They make it their business to watch over the schools, colleges and universities that are located within their community and exert strong influence over the policies that are established by these institutions. Many school boards, boards of trustees, and boards of regents are very much aware of the disorganized and apathetic condition of their constituency. However, they often succumb to pressure applied by vocal and aggressive groups who may represent only a small fraction of their constituency.

As an example, in 1965, a school committee in Boston, Massachusetts, staunchly opposed community involvement. Pressures from the committee succeeded in getting the city to water-down the citizens' participation section of the Boston "Model Cities" program. The result

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

was that the two-school federally funded project is being scrapped because its citizens' council and the committees have failed to resolve several basic disagreements, including the appointment of black administrators. Efforts to appoint a black administrator at the Martin Luther King School in Boston led to several days of violence in the neighborhood and finally resulted in the school's being closed during most of December and January.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the current literature suggests that good schools exist only in communities in which people are aware of them, have an interest in them, have frequent personal contact with them and know their needs. Current literature also suggests that these conditions are most likely to occur when teachers have had many varied contacts with other people and institutions in the community. The resultant relationship is not a one-way relationship in which the school faculty tells the people in the community what is good for them, or conversely, one in which the people in the community dictate to the school what it should teach. The literature suggests a mutually cooperative interacting relationship--one in which parents and teachers manifest a frank but friendly concern for the welfare of the children and the development of the programs

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<sup>1</sup>News Item, Detroit Free Press, February 27, 1969, pp. 1-2.

necessary for meeting the educational needs of the children and the adults of the community.

The Kerner Report makes a similar observation when it reports:

The absence of effective community-school relations has deprived the public education system of the communication required to overcome the divergence of goals. In the schools as in the larger society, the isolation of ghetto residents from the policy-making institutions of local government is adding to the polarization of the community and depriving the system of its self-rectifying potential.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the poor perceive the acquisition of a formal education as the solution to the problems that are endemic to their low socio-economic status.

According to Rose, education is one of the things that can give the blacks somewhat of a permanent change in their condition. To many, it holds the only promise for their children to escape the cycle of poverty.<sup>2</sup>

Many urban school administrators, school boards, and citizens are struggling with the problem of how to mobilize this intense desire for quality education and make it a powerful force for improvement of educational programs. The increased concern may be due to a number

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<sup>1</sup>Report of the National Advisory Committee on Civil Disorders, U.S. Riot Commission Report, Otto Kerner, chairman (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), pp. 436-437.

<sup>2</sup>Arnold Rose, The Negro in America (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), pp. 280-289.

of forces, such as increases in the basic education required of individuals, rate of social change, mobility of population, communications via mass media, and the complexity of contemporary societal life.

Citizen Participation as Perceived by  
Educational Administrators

Dr. James Allen, former New York Commissioner of Education, explained the goal of the boards of education:

Education can succeed only if it is reduced from the general to the specific, from broad goals and aims to classroom action. Our statements of goals, the meetings of the regents and of the hundreds of boards of education throughout New York State, the work of the department, and conferences and meetings such as the New York State School Board Association are all empty, lifeless, generalized, and unproductive unless the individual student is directly affected for the betterment of his own education.

. . . . .

Therefore the prime responsibility of a school board member in a changing world is to see to it that his own schools are equal to a changing world--to make certain that necessary adaptations, improvements, flexibility occur not somewhere else, sometime, but here and now in the schools which are in his trust.<sup>1</sup>

Allen further suggests that lay citizens view the board of education members as being responsible for carrying out the following specific tasks: appointing administrators, employing teachers, curriculum,

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Allen Jr., "The School Board in Today's World," in Vital Issues in American Education, ed. by Alice and Lester Crow (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), pp. 93-94.

student/teacher ratio, textbooks, teacher assignment, school construction, school schedules and calendar, attendance zones, recommending operational budgets, setting priorities, allocating expenditures, and in general, establishing and implementing all educational policies as well as interpreting state educational policies.

With such latitude and diversity of responsibility and authority the options that a school board has available for improving the quality of education under its control are almost limitless.<sup>2</sup>

In other words . . . lay men believe that school boards can translate educational goals into action--in a specific classroom in a specific school.

Dr. Ernest Melby speaking of the role of educational administrators stated:

Changes are occurring so rapidly one cannot predict what the situation will be like in another five or ten years. In addition, the racial revolution is changing the responsibilities and the activities of our school administrator. There is, for example, the demand in New York and other cities for a decentralization of educational administration. I feel that decentralization has to come about. In business, General Motors accomplished this kind of decentralization years ago. We've been a little slow to develop a creative environment in education, but if decentralization is to succeed, a great deal of theoretical work has to be done, calling for

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-91.

many changes in the responsibilities of teachers and principals. The American people are not willing anymore to sit idly by while professionals in education determine the daily lives of their children. They are protesting and they are demanding the right to be heard when the welfare of their children is involved. We must produce an administrative structure in which professionals and lay people can both contribute to the educational process in ways that are good for the school, good for the children and good for the welfare of American society.<sup>1</sup>

Many professional educators have come to recognize that they have a responsibility to the children, parents, and community for the quality of education that the school provides. Citizens have a right to expect them to be responsive to their requests that quality education be provided in their schools.

#### Citizen Participation as Perceived by Classroom Teachers

Because New York City has long been faced with the educational problems inherent in most large city school systems, problems such as local control of schools, school decentralization, teacher militancy, and a myriad of experimental programs to eliminate these problems, it seems reasonable to conclude that its professional educators have developed a degree of expertise in analyzing the situation.

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Ernest L. Melby, Address to Mott Interns, Flint, Michigan, September, 1968.



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Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York says:

We should support increased local participation. We should support it because it is an administrative necessity and it enhances the dignity of the participants to be democratically involved in doing something for themselves instead of having something done to or for them.<sup>1</sup>

Shanker's endorsement of parental involvement seems to be in principle only since he does not delineate the participatory role lay citizens are to assume.

The N.E.A. Research Division conducted a survey which revealed that teachers are quite definite about specific educational tasks that lay citizens can assume and those that should remain the role responsibility of professional educators. In general the teachers felt that parents should share responsibility with professionals primarily in tasks that are of an environmental nature. Educational tasks that are academic in nature and which call for professional judgment they felt should be left to the professionals. A very small percentage of teachers felt that parents should have "full" responsibility for any phase of school operation.

A recent teacher opinion poll asked a nationwide sample of public school teachers this question:

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Shanker, "Education in the Ghetto," Saturday Review, January 11, 1969, p. 61.

Do you believe that a representative group of parents from the school neighborhood should have full responsibility, responsibility shared with the school administration or no official responsibility for the operation of a particular school their children attend.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a list of the different aspects of parental involvement about which the respondents were asked to indicate their opinions.

	<u>Parent Responsibility</u>		
	<u>Full</u>	<u>Shared</u>	<u>None</u>
Selection of administrators	3.2%	31.7%	65.1%
Selection of teachers	0.3	14.8	84.9
Selection of textbooks	0.3	20.9	78.8
Determination of curriculum offerings	0.4	53.3	46.3
Determination of curriculum content	0.3	33.8	65.9
Teaching methods	0.1	9.3	90.6
Determination of student extracurricular activities	4.4	78.9	16.7
Supervision of student extracurricular activities	7.5	77.2	15.3
Determination of school budget allocations	1.2	46.0	52.8

Teachers in general believed that the school should be responsive to community views about the educational program. About one-half of the respondents said they

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<sup>1</sup>N.E.A. Research Division, "Teacher Opinion Poll," The Journal of the National Education Association (December, 1968), p. 7.

thought parents should share in determining curriculum offerings of the school and school budget allocations.

Opinions of urban teachers in the study differed very little from those of their suburban and rural counterparts as to which areas of school operation are suitable for parent participation.

### Citizen Participation as Perceived by Lay Citizens

The urban centers of America have undergone extraordinary social changes within the last twenty-five years. These centers and their institutions are currently in a state of crisis. What is the nature of this crisis?

Gist and Fava in analyzing reasons for ecological change suggest that the problem is one of steady and increasing deterioration of the city's social, civic, and economic institutions. They state that the cities have lost large sectors of their industry and retail business and that the middle and upper class population for the most part have moved to the suburbs. New communities have developed in the middle of orchards, beanfields and meadows. Roads have been improved and expanded so that the positive advantages of city living and its facilities are only minutes removed from quiet country life.

The exodus from the city continues, spurred on by the easy acquisition of housing made available by G.I. mortgages, F.H.A. loans and easy bank financing.

Replacements for these new suburbanites were largely from rural communities and of minority ethnic groups. Consequently, the inevitable emotional and social problems associated with the process of urbanization was further complicated by the ugly fact of discrimination.<sup>1</sup>

Clark suggests that these communities became lethargic, defeated and devoid of the spirit and leadership to improve their conditions. The drab squalor of their lives is reflected in the drab and uninspired educational programs. The school systems for most part continued to teach just as they had in past years. Teachers are reluctant to change their mode of teaching although the pupils for which their methods were originally devised are no longer with them.<sup>2</sup>

The disorganized, inexperienced and unschooled immigrants usually are unable to recognize the inferior quality of education that they are receiving. The importance of an individual's knowledge of basic educational objectives was illustrated by Horace Mann when he outlined the qualifications necessary to become a member of the school board:

A committee man should have a general acquaintance with all the fundamental principles of education, and with the branches of study to

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<sup>1</sup>Gist and Fava, op. cit., pp. 147-175.

<sup>2</sup>Kenneth B. Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1967), pp. 26-27.

be taught in school. At least, there should always be some members upon the board who are familiar with the studies to be taught, and the best modes of teaching them. But how can a man, who is unacquainted with the best rules and authorities for the pronunciation of words, decide upon the accuracy or inaccuracy of a candidate teacher's pronunciation, or examine a school or rectify the errors? . . . If a committee man feels officially obliged to ask some questions, and yet is ignorant of the appropriate questions or classes of questions to be asked, he is necessitated to ask inappropriate ones; for no others are left for him--he must ask questions as furnish no test of the capacity or incapacity, the fitness or the unfitness of the candidate teachers.<sup>1</sup>

Some educators take advantage of the ignorance of residents of these communities. They have assigned inexperienced and incompetent teachers to these schools and have allowed the physical plants to deteriorate.<sup>2</sup>

The major responsibility for developing methods to meet the needs of the underprivileged has traditionally rested with professional educators. Some professional educators have supported and reinforced the kind of educational system that has been dysfunctional to the welfare of the underprivileged members of our society.

Dr. Ernest Melby in a speech delivered at a Community School Workshop in Minneapolis in 1968 said:

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<sup>1</sup>Horace Mann, Horace Mann on the Crisis in Education, ed. by Louis Filler (Ohio: Antioch Press, 1958), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup>Estelle Fuchs, Pickets at the Gates (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 54.

Had our educational system given our white people (that is middle-class white people) compassion, had this education given our affluent people a sense of oneness with their fellow men and a feeling of responsibility for their welfare, we would have long ago done something about the problems that now give us a crisis for which we may have no solution. . . .<sup>1</sup>

There is much in the above statement that should cause professional educators, both urban and suburban, to access the educational priorities and objectives of their systems--and reorder them if need be.

Prominent educators have admonished our profession for failing to educate certain segments of our society.

John Niemeyer, President of Bank Street College of Education in New York, states:

This overall sense of failure is derived not only from failure in mastering basic academic skills, but from the fact that the school has not been able to give these children the social skills, the attitudes of self-respect and social sensitivity and the quickening of the mind for continuous learning which are the other necessary cognitive and effective elements of healthy productive personality. . . . Why is it that in these schools there is so little positive learning? And the answer--still an hypothesis but one from which we are increasingly unable to escape--seems to us to be that the chief cause of low achievement by children in these schools is the low expectation as to their learning capacity held by the professional staff and a general unwillingness or inability on the part of the school to make the adaptations of

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<sup>1</sup>Ernest L. Melby, "The Community School a Social Imperative," N.C.S.E.A. News (October, 1968), p. 1.

curriculum and school organization necessary if the children in these schools are to learn.<sup>1</sup>

Selected Review of Alternate Designs to  
Facilitate Citizen Participation in  
the Decision-Making Processes of  
the Public Schools

Rationale for Establishing Citizen  
Advisory Committees

The decision of local boards of education to bring about greater citizen participation in the decision-making process of the public schools through citizens advisory committees is not a new phenomenon.

Citizen committees have existed in the United States for 60 years. Many types have been tried with varying results.<sup>2</sup>

Clyde Campbell made this observation about citizen participation:

The lay man doesn't ask whether immorality, delinquency, and crime are educational problems, police issues, social agency responsibilities or so on ad infinitum; his concern is what is happening and why, and what can be done to prevent a progressive deterioration in their social development. To say it another way, the specialist often gets caught up into all kinds of bureaucratic operations--power struggles, jurisdictional disputes political machinations

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<sup>1</sup>John H. Niemeyer (paper presented at Symposium on School Dropouts, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Illinois Citizen Education Council, "A Research and Development Project on Citizen Participation in Policy Making for Public Education in Illinois," Urbana (November, 1963), p. 3.



and the like that the public-spirited citizen with clear mind may avoid. Because the layman is free from disconcerting emotional entanglements, he often is able to cut straight through to the heart of a problem and probe vigorously for his solution.<sup>1</sup>

In the same article Campbell further states:

Citizens have significant decisions to make. Education is not the sole responsibility of the board of education, not a program handed down from a national capital, not a classroom operation alone, not the work of the institution separate from all other institutions.

What people become depends on how people have lived in their communities.<sup>2</sup>

The question of the individual's relationship to his public institutions is one of the most pressing questions facing society today. The school is not something outside or apart from the community. The quality of the relationship between the school and the community is determined in large measure, by the extent and effectiveness of the interaction achieved between the two. To delineate the channels for interaction is not always simple. To do so, it is frequently necessary to consider the entire community structure.

The size and ecological structure of a community plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of the machinery established for co-ordinating the interaction

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Clyde M. Campbell, The Community School and Its Administration (October, 1964), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

of the residents to its institutions. For this reason, the rationalization for decentralization in New York, Detroit, Chicago and other large urban communities does not always apply to the rationale for decentralization in smaller urban communities. Decentralization plans proposed for these large cities still leave each semi-autonomous school district with considerably more pupils than presently exist in the average size school systems throughout the country.

It is the purpose of this section of the study to investigate the purpose and organizational structure of several often used types of citizen committees. The school systems to be analyzed have each contributed information concerning their proposed or prevailing organizational structures of their lay citizens committees.

There are two persistent complaints about the nation's big-city school systems. (1) They are burdened down with top heavy bureaucracies, and (2) they are unresponsive to the needs of the neighborhoods they serve.

Some school systems have responded to these complaints by breaking up their large school district into smaller ones. But decentralization in the large urban community is not a phenomenon that is peculiar to education alone. Many community institutions are undergoing change. Louis Wirth states:

The urbanization of the world, which is one of the most impressive facts of modern times, has wrought profound changes in virtually every phase of social life. The recency and rapidity of urbanization in the United States accounts for the accuteness of our urban problems and our lack of awareness of them. Despite the dominance of urbanism in the modern world we lack a sociological definition of the city which would take adequate account of the fact that while the city is the characteristic locus of urbanism, the urban mode of life is not confined to cities. For sociological purposes, a city is relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of heterogeneous individuals. . . . Heterogeneity tends to break down rigid social structures and produce increased mobility, instability, insecurity and the affiliation of individuals with a variety of intersecting and tangential social groups with a high rate of membership turnover. The pecuniary nexus tends to displace personal relationships and institutions tend to cater to mass rather than individual requirements. The individual thus becomes effective only as he acts through organized groups.<sup>1</sup>

The large numbers of people in the city make it virtually impossible for the institutions to recognize and appeal to the expressed desires of each individual. It is only by joining with others of similar interests to form collective interest units that the individual urbanites significantly influences the economic, political, religion, cultural, recreational, social and educational institutions of his community.

There are various methods by which citizen committees for public education may be evolved. Until

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<sup>1</sup>Wirth, op. cit., p. 23.

recently, writers in this field considered that lay citizen committees should be selected by the board of education or the superintendent of schools and to have an advisory role only.

McClosky states:

All council (citizens committees) members should recognize the limitations of their functions and authority. The council should be advisory only, and the board's responsibility for making final decisions should be clearly enunciated.<sup>1</sup>

Sumption states:

Persons selected for membership on the committee should be intelligent, competent and civic-minded. They should be interested in the welfare of their community to the extent that they are willing to give time and effort to the study of a vital community problem. Selections should be made in terms of what people can and will do rather than what organizations they represent. If a person is intelligent, competent and is willing to give his time it is immaterial whether he belongs to ten organizations or none.

The committee must always represent the total community educational community, never a segment of it. The committee should be as truly representative of the community as possible. Its membership should be drawn from the different geographic areas, cultural and economic levels, religious denominations, racial backgrounds and vocational pursuits of the community. It should be a real cross-section of the community. An equal division between men and women has been found to work out quite satisfactorily. In no case should the committee be composed either entirely of men or entirely women. Care should

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon McCloskey, Education and Public Education (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959), p. 380.

be taken to see that both parents and nonparents are represented, and to include property owners as well as renters.<sup>1</sup>

Kindred has recommended the following methods by which the membership of citizen committees may be determined:

1. . . . selection by the board of education;
2. selection by invitation from the board of education to community interest groups;
3. selection by asking individuals to name others whom they believe would be qualified, and
4. a combination of the three methods named.<sup>2</sup>

In more recent times the trend has been towards more school community autonomy, particularly in the method of acquiring lay citizen representation and defining their responsibilities.

Fischer writes:

Wise and efficient use of the school's unique resources depends largely upon decisions that must be made separately in each school. Conditions and capabilities vary so widely in the American educational establishment that even in the face of overriding common problems and pressures it is not possible to issue from any central control point directives that will be equally valid in every local district or even the schools of a single district. . . .

Every community must make its own decisions about how it will use its schools and having

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<sup>1</sup>Merle R. Sumption, How to Conduct a Citizens School Survey (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Leslie W. Kindred, School Public Relations (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1951), pp. 202-204.

made its decision, it must be ready to live with the consequences. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The increased fusion of state and federal financial assistance to public schools has given lay citizens a stronger role in influencing educational policy. One of the strong stipulations for public school systems to acquire these funds is that their programs include "maximum" citizen involvement. Title I of the Elementary Secondary Education Act is designed to give parents a larger voice in determining the programs and services provided for their children.<sup>2</sup>

Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 has been catalytic in giving lay citizens from 63 cities throughout the United States a stronger voice in defining the lay citizens role in governing their institutions.

Section 103 (a) (2) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act requires that a Model Cities program calls for "wide spread citizen participation in the program." A policy statement by the United States

<sup>1</sup>John H. Fischer, "The Priorities Question in Education," in Vital Issues in American Education, ed. by Alice and Lester D. Crow (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>James E. Mauch, "Breaking Tradition Forges School-Community Ties," Phi Delta Kappan, L, No. 5 (1969), p. 273.

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

concerning citizen participation is:

. . . the means of introducing the views of area residents in policy making should be developed and opportunities should be afforded area residents to participate actively in planning and carrying out the demonstration [program].

This requirement grows out of the conviction that improving the quality of life of the residents of the model neighborhood can be accomplished only by the affirmative action of the people themselves. This requires a means of building self-esteem, competence and a desire to participate effectively in solving the social and physical problems of their community.

HUD will not determine the ideal organizational pattern designed to accomplish this objective. It will, however, outline performance standards for citizen participation which must be achieved by each City Demonstration Agency. It is expected that patterns will vary from city to city, reflecting local circumstances. The city government, as the principal instrument for carrying out the Model Cities Program, will be responsible for insuring that whatever organization is adopted provides the means for the model neighborhood's citizens to participate and be fully involved in policy-making, planning and the execution of all program elements. For a plan to be approved it must provide for such an organization and spell out precisely how the participation and involvement of the residents is to be carried out throughout the life of the Model Cities Program.<sup>1</sup>

Compliance with the 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate the schools has led many states to pass legislation that requires the local boards of education

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Program Guide (Washington, D.C.: December, 1967), pp. 20-21.

to submit plans designed to achieve racial balance within the school system. Some states have required that each affected district submit to its state board of education an acceptable detailed plan or timetable for implementation. In many cases these regulations specify that each imbalance correction plan specify the extent to which community group and minority group representatives have participated in the formulation of the plan.<sup>1</sup>

For various reasons, large urban school systems are now making efforts to bring about greater lay citizenry involvement in the operation of the schools. However, regardless of the reason, the organizational structures for achieving this objective are strikingly similar.

#### New York's Plan

New York has a school system which serves over 1.1 million pupils. In August of 1967, after a winter of crisis-related incidents stemming from the Intermediate School 201 controversy, the New York Board of Education established three experimental school districts.<sup>2</sup> The board was seeking an answer to demands for increased community participation. Desegregation and compensatory

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<sup>1</sup>Connecticut, Regulations Concerning Racial Imbalance in the Public Schools, Public Act No. 773, Connecticut General Assembly, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Sizer, op. cit., pp. 167-185.



programs were not working to the satisfaction of ghetto parents and new options for educational reform were necessary. Direct community participation was to be the essential ingredient.<sup>1</sup>

Based on these three experimental programs, a final plan has been introduced that will decentralize the whole 1.1 million pupil school system. The new plan would transfer many of the city board's powers to 33 elected neighborhood boards. The appointed central board would retain final budgetary control and continue to negotiate a citywide contract with the teacher union.

#### Local School Boards

The proposed local school boards shall be responsible for the overall educational program within the local school districts. The major function of the local school board is to establish education policies for its own district. Policies established by the local school boards must be made in accordance with existing laws, by-laws, rules and regulations, applicable city laws and contractual agreements entered into by the Central Board of Education of the city of New York. The boards may prescribe appropriate by-laws to regulate and prescribe

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<sup>1</sup>"Decentralization Dilemma," Time Magazine, December 29, 1967, p. 31.

their relationship with their local superintendent of schools. The local superintendents are responsible for carrying out and implementing the policies established by the local boards as well as the administration of the schools and educational programs in the various districts. Each local school will select one of its members to represent it in a city-wide confederation of local schools which will concern itself with city-wide educational problems.

The guidelines then spell out in more concrete terms the increased authority and responsibilities of the local school boards. A major goal is to reduce the gap between the source of important decisions and the place of impact. Decentralization should result in making all administrative and supervisory services more readily responsive to the needs of the children, and to the ability of the schools to cope with these needs. It is to be hoped therefore that there will be as much authority as possible for them to operate more independently and thus more effectively and more responsively to local needs. Only in this way can the principle of accountability be extended to principals and teachers.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Local Board's Relationship to the Central Board of Education

The New York School System's plan for decentralization has been designed to achieve optimum lay citizen

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<sup>1</sup>New York Board of Education, Guidelines for Decentralization (New York: June, 1969), p. 5.



participation within a legalistic and responsible administrative structure. Although the educational decision-making process will be brought closer to the individuals who are ultimately effected by the decisions, the plan for reorganization is not intended to give the local boards autonomous authority concerning community educational policy. The limited powers of the local boards have been clearly defined. The central board has the ultimate say in educational policy and may override or rescind any action recommended by the local board. The New York guidelines for decentralization state:

It is important to make certain that local school boards understand the authority and responsibilities of the City Board of Education now that the Marchi Law has been implemented by the City Board and the Board of Regents. There remains with the City Board overall supervisory responsibility for the exercise of school functions by local boards. The City Board has not, and legally may not, divest itself of certain ultimate supervisory responsibilities for local school boards and for the manner in which the delegated functions and powers are exercised. For example, experience may prove that the functions delegated to local boards should be modified rescinded. Sec 2564 (3) of the Education Law provides that the City Board has the power to modify or rescind function, power, obligation or duty delegated to a local school board. Furthermore, Sec 2564 (2) of the Education Law expressly empowers the city Board to appoint or provide for the election of a local school board, and to "remove at its pleasure" such boards. This power, which is reserved to the city Board, is for the extreme situation where, after careful consideration,

the city Board concludes that it must, in order to meet its responsibilities, remove a local school board.<sup>1</sup>

Among the powers which the Superintendent said he intended to leave to the greatest degree of authority in the hands of the local superintendent are:

1. Recommendations for appointment.
2. Recommendations for transfer within the district.
3. Recommendations for the granting or denial of tenure.
4. Recommendations for the termination of services of a teacher during the probationary period.
5. Recommendations for proceedings on charges against personnel with tenure.
6. Recommendations on selection of textbooks and materials of instruction.<sup>2</sup>

#### Detroit's Plan

During the 75th Michigan legislative session of 1969, State Senators Young, Brown, Cartwright introduced Enrolled Senate Bill No. 635. The bill was enacted and provided for Detroit's single 300,000 student district to be divided into from seven to eleven regional or neighborhood districts, each containing not more than 50,000 nor less than 25,000 pupils within the district.

Voters in those designated districts are each expected to contain one or two city high schools and are

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

to elect nine-member regional district boards at the 1970 November general election. These regional districts will have authority to hire and discharge local superintendents and teachers. The first class school district would retain all the powers and duties now possessed by the first class district except for those given to the regional school district boards under the provision of the act.

#### Local School Board Responsibilities

Section 5 of State Senate Bill No. 635 gives the regional school district board the following powers (subject to guidelines yet to be established by the primary district board):

1. Employ and discharge a superintendent for the regional school district from a list or lists of candidates submitted by the district board.
2. Employ and discharge, assign and promote all teachers and other employees of the regional school district, subject to review by the first class school district board, which may overrule, modify or affirm the action of the regional district board.
3. Determine the curriculum, use of educational facilities and establishment of educational and testing programs in the regional school district.
4. Determine the budget for the regional school district based upon the allocation of funds received from the first class school district board.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan, Senate Bill No. 635, Michigan 75th General Assembly, 1969.

Section 7 of the bill gives the first class school district the responsibility for performing the following functions for the regional school districts:

1. Central purchasing.
2. Payroll.
3. Contact negotiations for all employees, subject to 1947, as amended, being sections 423. 201. to 423. 216 of the Compiled Laws of 1948, and subject to any bargaining certification and to the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement pertaining to affected employees.
4. Property management and maintenance.
5. Bonding.
6. Special education programs.
7. Allocation of funds for capital outlay and operations to each regional school district.
8. On or before November 1, 1970, establish guidelines for the implementation of the provisions of section 5.<sup>1</sup>

#### New Haven, Connecticut's Plan

New Haven has a population of approximately 150,000 residents and a public school enrollment of 20,500 pupils.

The decision to bring about more citizen involvement in New Haven, Connecticut, was not due to a state legislative act as in the cases of New York and Detroit. Nor was it due to any great pressure by lay citizens to wrest community control of the schools. Citizen involvement is being instituted in New Haven as a part of its community education program.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

One of the most striking things about the educational systems in many urban communities is that there are virtually no formal channels through which persons without children in the public schools can make known their feelings about educational matters. Cloward and Jones conducted a study which showed that a typical urban school is usually influenced by only 4 per cent of the residents in the community. This 4 per cent is usually comprised of past or current officers of the P.T.A. A complete breakdown of their findings is as follows: Distribution Index of Five Categories of Parental School Involvement.<sup>1</sup>

Past or present officers of the P.T.A.	4 per cent
Attend most or all the meetings of the P.T.A.	7 " "
Belong to P.T.A. but attends few meetings	15 " "
Does not belong to P.T.A. but visit the schools	45 " "
No contact with the schools	29 " "

Harris states:

The size and ecological distribution of a community plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of the structured machinery for co-ordinating the interaction of the residents to its institutions. For this reason the rationale for decentralization based upon the same criteria as New York, Detroit, Chicago, etc., does not necessarily apply to smaller

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<sup>1</sup>Richard A. Cloward and James A. Jones, "Social Class Educational Attitudes and Participation," in Education in Depressed Areas, ed. by A. Harry Passow (New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press, 1963), p. 197.



communities: New York has over 1.1 million students, Detroit has over 300,000. The reorganization of these school systems into smaller districts will still leave each local district with considerably more students than the average total school systems within the United States. The impetus to organize into smaller school districts is in part an attempt of these systems to (1) meet the unique needs of the heterogeneous communities and (2) to achieve better administrative efficiency and communication.<sup>1</sup>

### Design for Citizen Involvement

The proposed plan for citizen participation in the New Haven School System in its present form will only permit lay citizens to participate in the operation of the schools in an advisory capacity. The merits of this form of participation have yet to be weighed in light of the school-community relationships that presently exist.

In September of 1968, Superintendent of Schools John A. Santini appointed a blue ribbon committee of professional educators and asked them to (1) establish a rationale for school councils, (2) identify areas in which councils can assist professional educators, and (3) to suggest ways for the organization and implementation of the councils.

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<sup>1</sup>George D. Harris, "The Community" (paper presented at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, November 20, 1969).

In June of 1969 the committee submitted a plan for citizen involvement to the superintendent which called for the establishment of a council for each school. The council recommended that the principal of the school must facilitate communication between the community and the school. In addition, the principal is to be responsible for carrying out local and state laws and the policies established by the board of education. As a member of the staff, he must support and carry out policies set by the board of education. When certain policies become unworkable or unacceptable to an individual school, the school council may request consideration for change in policy. The principal should become active in initiating requests for changes in policies which are no longer applicable to the operation of his school.

Proposed school councils will be composed of parents, teachers, civil service employees (clerks and custodians), upper grade students, and non-voting at-large community residents. Principals are members of these councils but are not allowed to vote.

The councils will concern themselves with the following school functions: school construction, vandalism, establishment of behavior and dress codes of students, planning and supervising extracurricula activities,

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assisting in recruiting candidates for school employment, and assisting in the development of new educational programs.

The incumbent board of education would not relinquish any of its administrative or decision-making powers to the proposed councils.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

The review of the literature revealed that education in the United States has always been considered to be the function and responsibility of the people. During the earlier period of colonization, responsibility for educating children gradually moved from the home and community. Overall, very little organizational change has taken place in the governing of public education since the first forms were established during the colonization period.

In recent times, education has become one of the singulary most important institutions within our society. The increased concern is probably due to a number of influences, such as the complexity of contemporary societal life, the rapid rate of social change, mobility brought on by a technical revolution, an increase in the amount of

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<sup>1</sup>School Committee on Citizen Involvement, "Report to the Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools" (New Haven, Connecticut, June, 1969).

basic knowledge required for individuals to function within the society, and the dissemination of information vis-a-vis a highly developed mass media system.

Many segments of the community are expressing a desire to influence the educational system as it struggles to meet the demands of a new society. Many urban school systems are coming to realize the inevitability and merits of increased citizen involvement in the educative process and are developing various forms of citizen committees to achieve it. These committees are structured to allow lay citizens to participate and assist in redefining the broad and specific objectives of their public school systems.

This being the case, the educational administrator is confronted with two kinds of problems: working with other community leaders to improve the total learning environment of the community and working with his own staff to clarify the unique purposes of the school and to find ways of adequately implementing them. Moreover, since school communities vary greatly in their characteristics, the balance between these two lines of endeavor must be determined anew for each situation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Roald F. Campbell, "What Peculiarities in Educational Administration Make it a Special Case," in Administrative Theory in Education, ed. by Andrew W. Halpin (New York: Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 174.



## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF STUDY

#### Introduction

The basic design of this study is to identify and describe the formal and informal modes of communication between Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School and the residents of the lower socio-economic community in which it is situated. (That the effectiveness of a two-way communications channel is important was alluded to in Chapter II).

This study is a descriptive survey as described by Good:

Descriptive studies may include present facts or current conditions concerning the nature of a group of persons . . . and may involve the procedures of induction, analysis, classification, enumeration or measurement. The purposes of the descriptive-survey investigations may be: 1) To secure evidence concerning the existing situation or current conditions 2) To identify standards or norms with which to compare present conditions in order to plan the next step.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carter V. Good, Introduction to Educational Research (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), p. 224.

Borg states:

Descriptive studies serve several very important functions in education. First in new sciences the body of knowledge is relatively small, and we are often confused with conflicting claims and theories. Under these conditions, it is often of great value merely to know the current state of the science. Descriptive research provides us with a starting point and, therefore, is often carried out as a preliminary step to be followed by research using more vigorous control and more objective methods.<sup>1</sup>

According to Van Dalen:

Descriptive studies that obtain accurate facts about existing conditions or detect significant relationships between current phenomena and interpret the meaning of the data provide educators with practical and immediately useful information. Factual information about intelligent plans about future courses of action and helps them interpret educational problems more effectively to the public. Pertinent data regarding the present science may focus attention upon needs that otherwise would remain unnoticed. Since existing educational conditions, processes, practices and programs are consistently changing, there is always a need for up-to-date descriptions of what is taking place. Descriptive studies supply not only practical information that can be used to justify or improve the immediate situation, but also the factual foundations upon which higher and higher levels of scientific understanding can be built. Descriptive research is a necessary initial step for a young science to take and sometimes it is the only method that can be employed to study social situations and aspects of human behavior. Since not all social phenomena can be subjected to laboratory experiments, studying conditions as they exist in a classroom community . . . may be the only way to examine and analyze the factors involved in a given

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<sup>1</sup>Walter R. Borg, Educational Research an Introduction (New York: David McKay Co., 1963), p. 202.



situation. The descriptive method of investigation has led to the development of many research tools and it has provided some means of studying phenomena that other methods cannot probe.<sup>1</sup>

#### Source of Data

The source of data used in this study consists of information obtained from a questionnaire survey that was administered to a random sample of parents of children attending Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School in New Haven, Connecticut. This instrument attempted to measure the degree of participatory and communicatory interaction that existed between a neighborhood school, which is located in a lower socio-economic community, and parents of children attending that school. During the course of the interview each respondent was asked to answer questions which were designed to measure his attitude towards the school, the extent of his participation in school activities, the degree of factual knowledge the respondent possessed concerning the operation of the school, and the efficacy of the media through which he learned about the school's programs. The interviews and questionnaires were administered to each of the participants by two experienced interviewers during the period of November 6, 1969, and January 15, 1970.

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<sup>1</sup>Deobold B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1962), pp. 212-213.

### The Setting

New Haven, Connecticut, is located in a region of the United States that is commonly referred to as southern New England. It is located on the eastern seaboard and is contiguous to Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and the northern shore of Long Island Sound. The city is approximately 90 miles east of New York City and about 150 miles southwest of Boston, Massachusetts. New Haven cannot be considered as being typical of most New England towns since it is currently the second largest city in Connecticut. However, it can be said that it is typical of most Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA) that have undergone rapid social and ethnological change within the past decade.<sup>1</sup>

New Haven was settled on April 10, 1638. Its original inhabitants were mostly of Puritan stock coming from Boston and England. Descendents of the original settlers still remain but are not overtly involved in running the community. Currently second and third generation Italians comprise the dominate influential ethnic group. New Haveners take pride in their contribution to American history. Such notable Americans as Roger Sherman,

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<sup>1</sup>Noel P. Gist and Sylvia F. Fava, Urban Society (5th ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 245-264.

Noah Webster, and Eli Whitney are buried in the Grove Street Cemetery, which is located near the center of town.

The town plan of New Haven was laid out around a 16 acre green in 1638. Today the green stands pretty much the same as it did in those days. Three Protestant churches were added in 1812 and the descendents of the original stock continues to worship there.

New Haven boasts a natural harbor which catapulted it into world recognition as an import-export center during the latter part of the eighteenth century. However, the eventual expansion of Boston's and New York's ports caused a decline in the use of the New Haven harbor. New Haven has remained the largest manufacturing community in the state with over 1,000 large and small manufacturing plants. Its largest institution is Yale University, whose influence is felt in many facets of New Haven's milieu. Yale University was founded in 1701 and has become one of the most influential educational centers in the United States. There are several other institutions of higher learning of lesser stature in the area, as well as several private high schools, 3 public high schools, 3 middle public schools and 36 public elementary schools.<sup>1</sup> There are more than 20 private and parochial schools (mainly Hebrew and

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<sup>1</sup>Information was obtained from the New Haven School System Central Office, December, 1969.

Catholic) located in the Greater New Haven Metropolitan Community. These schools have overflow enrollments and are currently hard pressed to accommodate the needs of their parishioners. The public school system is presently 59.9 per cent nonwhite although the nonwhite population comprises less than 25 per cent of the total population of 152,000 inhabitants. In recent years the total population has steadily declined as has been typical of many urban communities.<sup>1</sup>

The ethnic stratification of the community is reflected in its housing patterns. The affluence attained by many first and second generation white Americans enabled them to move to the suburbs into newer and more luxurious homes. New housing developments sprang up in the suburban communities of Hamden, Woodbridge, North Haven, West Haven, Orange, Bethany and Cheshire. Roads were improved and expanded so that the resources of the city were only minutes removed from those who worked in the city and resided in the suburbs. Negroes and Puerto Ricans, most of whom came from the rural communities of the South and Puerto Rico replaced those who were able to move from the older inner-city neighborhoods to the suburbs. Adequate housing in the inner-city became scarce. Most of the

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<sup>1</sup>Gist and Fava, op. cit., p. 54.

available housing was substandard, but it too became scarce as much of it was torn down to make room for industrial parks, expressways, new commercial buildings, and high rise and high income housing.<sup>1</sup>

In order to accommodate the rapid influx of emigrants from Puerto Rico and migrants from Appalachia and the rural South, the city administration of New Haven was induced to look beyond the private sector for assistance in meeting the housing needs of its newest citizens. Subsequently, the federal and state governments assumed a major role in subsidizing the construction of over 3,000 low and moderate income public housing units located throughout the New Haven community. (At the time of this writing, the Public Housing Authority reports that there are over 2,000 applicants waiting to be placed.) Brookside and Rockview public housing projects are contiguously situated and located on the periperal limits of the city. (Map showing exact location of the Brookside-Rockview public housing projects included in Appendix E.)

#### Characteristics of the Sample

The Brookside-Rockview community is geographically isolated and separated from the social, business and

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Edward White Jr., Director, New Haven Housing Authority, December 22, 1969.

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municipal services of the city by several miles of parks, two cemeteries, a dump, a college campus and a rock quarry. There is a single road linking Brookside-Rockview to the central city. The community is served by a single elementary school, Katherine A. Brennan. Children attending secondary school are either transported by their parents, use the city bus, or walk. The community manifests all the characteristics of a densely populated, compacted living, urban area, yet its small size and easily identifiable physical boundaries enabled the writer to isolate the socio-economic, social, and attitudinal characteristics of the residents to a greater extent than could be accomplished in a more cosmopolitan setting.

Rockview is a federally assisted, low income housing project while Brookside is state subsidized, moderate income housing which was established primarily for moderate income families. The total number of families and housing units is reflected in Table 3.1. The table also reflects the number of single-parent families, the proportion of families receiving full or partial subsistence allowances, as well as the number in each project who are classified as poverty families.

Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School was built in 1954 to serve the children from the Brookside-Rockview public housing project. The school has had 4 principals

TABLE 3.1

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS OF BROOKSIDE-ROCKVIEW  
PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS\*

Brookside		Rockview	
<u>Family Characteristics</u>		<u>Family Characteristics</u>	
Single Parent (F)	55 (2M)	Single Parent (F)	93
No. Children	799	No. Children	577
Elderly Families	7	Elderly Families	31
Total Families	294	Total Families	190
<u>Racial and Ethnic Characteristics</u>		<u>Racial and Ethnic Characteristics</u>	
Negro	251	Negro	150
Caucasian	37	Caucasian	37
PR, Ph, C/N, Other	6	PR, Ph, C/N, Other	3
<u>Economic Characteristics</u>		<u>Economic Characteristics</u>	
Poverty Families	40	Poverty Families	123
Families Aided	26	Families Aided	90
Fully Aided	12	Fully Aided	68
Partially Aided	14	Partially Aided	22

\*Based on information obtained from the New Haven Housing Authority Records, December, 1969.



during the last 15 years. Table 3.2 lists the experience and educational profile characteristics of its principals during their tenure.

As can be noted in Table 3.2, each of the principals had at least 17 years experience in education at the time when he was assigned to Katherine A. Brennan. The average length of educational experience for principals at Katherine A. Brennan was 19.3 years. The average number of years of administrative experience upon each's assignment to Katherine Brennan was 12.3 years. All of the principals held at least a masters degree. While these data in and of itself are not significant, it does indicate that the administrators of Katherine A. Brennan were experienced and professionally trained.

Each principal reported on an informal questionnaire that he felt the problems encountered in administering Katherine A. Brennan's educational program were similar to other inner-city schools in which they had been administrators.<sup>1</sup> Appendix A includes the questionnaire that was administered to past and present principals of Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School.

Katherine A. Brennan employs a K-6 organization with approximately 460 pupils enrolled. Its minority

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<sup>1</sup>Personal correspondence between the writer and past principals of Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School, December, 1969.

TABLE 3.2  
EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATIONAL PROFILES OF  
KATHERINE A. BRENNAN PRINCIPALS  
1954-1969\*

Tenure	Total Experience in Education	Total Experience as Administrator	Degree Status
I. 1954-1965	17	7	M.A.
II. 1965-1966	23	21	M.A.
III. 1966-1969	21	16	M.A.
IV. 1969-	18	7	M.A.

\*Based on information obtained from the New Haven Public School System Records for 1969.

group composition at 93 percent<sup>1</sup> is one of the highest in the system (Table 3.3). According to a report conducted by the Connecticut State Department of Education during 1969, the New Haven School System ranks second in the state with a minority group enrollment of 59 percent. Minority group enrollment ranges from a low of 1 per cent in one school to a high of 99 per cent in another. (At the time of this writing, the New Haven School System is undertaking measures to correct the racial imbalance in the public schools.)

TABLE 3.3

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS ATTENDING  
KATHERINE A. BRENNAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL,  
NOVEMBER, 1968\*

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Total N of Pupils	N of White Pupils	% of White Pupils	% of Negro Pupils	N of Puerto Rican Pupils	% of Puerto Rican Pupils	N of Other Pupils	% of Other Children
460	20	4.4	428	10	2.2	2	.4

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\*Based on information obtained from the New Haven Public School System Records for 1969.

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<sup>1</sup>Information obtained from the New Haven School System Central Office, December, 1969.

## Procedures

### Initiating the Study

A request for permission to conduct the study and a copy of the proposal which had been approved by the writer's guidance committee was sent to Mr. Gerald Barbaresi, Superintendent of Public Education, New Haven, Connecticut. Subsequently, several personal interviews were held with the superintendent to discuss the purpose of the study. Since the New Haven School System was in the process of establishing citizens' advisory councils in each of its public schools, the superintendent felt that the data gathered from the survey would be valuable in helping him to assess current attitudes toward the school as well as identifying areas for lay citizen involvement in the educational program. The superintendent approved both the request for the study and a rough draft of the questionnaire to be used in the survey in its original form. The superintendent also assisted the writer in identifying the Brookside-Rockview community as the population to be used in the study because of its socio-economic similarity to the sample population that was described in the proposal.

In addition to studying a proposal designed to achieve greater lay citizen involvement in New Haven, the writer contacted superintendents of several large urban

school systems that were known to be developing plans to achieve greater citizen participation and asked them to contribute to this study detailed information concerning their proposals.

The Superintendents of New York, Detroit, and New Haven responded. An analytical review of these proposals for citizen involvement is presented in the review of the literature of the preceding chapter. (Appendix B includes selected correspondence which transpired between the author and the responding public school administrators.)

#### The Development of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was ultimately used in the study was reviewed and redesigned with the assistance and co-operation of the Research Services Bureau of the College of Education, Michigan State University. The questionnaire was field tested in Flint, Michigan, in a community with socio-economic characteristics similar to those of the selected sample. Each respondent was asked to make comments about the questionnaire itself in order to assist in identifying questions that seemed ambiguous to him, to suggest questions that might be included in the questionnaire, and to suggest ways in which the questionnaire might generally be improved. The interview

techniques used during the pre-test were essentially the same as those that were used in administering the final survey.

The respondents comments concerning the field test questionnaire were evaluated. Each item response was checked to see if the item was misinterpreted by some of the subjects. A number of respondents gave specific recommendations on how the questionnaire could be improved. The final revision of the structured interview questionnaire used in this study was approved by the research department of the College of Education. The questions selected for the final questionnaire are classified under five specific headings:

Information About the Respondent. This section of the questionnaire is designed to establish a social status norm for the sample population.

Communication About Public School. This section attempts to identify the major source of the respondent's knowledge about the public school system.

Participation in Public School Affairs. This section measures the areas and degree of the respondent's past participation in school affairs. It also reveals the circumstances under which the respondent has interacted with the school and the areas of the educational program in which the respondent wishes to participate if given the opportunity.

### Information About the New Haven Public Schools.

Information gathered from this section of the questionnaire is used to determine the extent of factual knowledge possessed by the respondent regarding the public school system's educational programs. The data is also used to determine if a correlation exists between the amount of knowledge possessed by the individual and his attitude towards the educational program.

Feelings Toward the Schools. This section of the questionnaire will assess the respondent's perceptions of the role of the lay citizen in the governance of the public schools. An attempt will be made to identify new areas of parental responsibility in carrying out traditional school tasks. A comparison will be made with the areas of lay citizen responsibility as perceived by professional educators and respondents of the selected sample.

### Identification of the Sample Population

Once the school district was identified, a copy of the questionnaire was sent to the principal of Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School. Subsequently, a personal interview was held between the principal and the writer for the purpose of discussing the nature and purpose of the study as well as to establish procedures for randomly selecting the parents who would eventually

comprise the sample population. The names of 50 residents who had children attending Katherine A. Brennan were randomly selected from the school's Civil Defense list for our sample population.

#### Administration of the Questionnaire

In order to minimize any personal biasing that might have occurred if the researcher had administered the questionnaire personally, the services of two experienced indigenous community workers were obtained to conduct the survey. Mr. Joseph Downey, Director of the Community Services Division of Community Progress Incorporated (C.P.I.), volunteered to serve as survey coordinator for the researcher. A working session was held for the interviewers and the survey coordinator in order to answer any questions concerning the administration of the questionnaire, develop tentative interview strategy, and standardize interview techniques to be used in administering the questionnaire.

The names and addresses of the 50 parents of the sample group were divided randomly and given to each of the interviewers. Subsequently, a personal interview was arranged by the interviewers with each member of the sample group. During the interview, each respondent was given the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire



himself or to have the interviewer fill it out if the task of doing so seemed threatening.

Limitations on administering the questionnaire were influenced by the variation of interview environment. Since each interview was conducted in the respondent's home, obviously the interview environment fluctuated with each interview. The interviewers reported more distractions in some homes than in others. (Appendix C includes a sample of the final questionnaire form used in this study.)

#### Treatment of Data

The data collected for this study were classified and categorized in the five subordinate areas of the questionnaire cited earlier in this chapter. Each subsection of the questionnaire was analyzed separately. A normative weighting scale was devised for the purpose of segmental comparison. The tabulation of the data was confined to simple correlations and per cents and central tendencies.

#### Summary

An instrument was developed which would measure the attitudes of the residents of a school district towards the programs of that particular school and the extent of the flow of communication between the school

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and the community. The data will be used to identify educational areas of parental concern and to develop a system of communications that would facilitate having these needs met. It is anticipated that these identifiable areas of concern will provide the basis for the development of a meaningful participatory role for the residents of the neighborhood.

In this chapter the writer has described the type of research being constructed, the method of selecting the sample population, the development of the instrument, the administration of the questionnaire, and the method of interpreting the data.

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## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The specific purpose of this study, as stated earlier, was concerned with identifying and describing the effect of formal and informal channels of communication that exist between a neighborhood elementary school and the parents of the children who are enrolled there.

The data presented in this chapter were obtained from a five part community survey which was administered to a randomly selected group of 50 adults who were residing in the Brookside-Rockview public housing project and whose children were attending the Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School between November, 1969 and January, 1970.

Tabulation of the data was confirmed to simple correlations, simple per cents, and the reporting of central tendencies. Each section of the questionnaire was analyzed separately and the data presented under individual subheadings. Where possible, this chapter presents correlations between specific testable variables of the sample population and central tendencies of selected item responses. Reported levels of significance were

established by using Fisher's "Values of Correlation Coefficient for Different Levels of Significance."<sup>1</sup> (A presentation of the complete table of correlation coefficients is included in Table 4.13.)

### Demographic Data

The data in Tables 4.1.1 to 4.1.6 reflect the demographic indices of the sample population.

Since this study deals with the impact of involvement in the educational decision-making process by various dimensions and measures of social class, it would seem appropriate to briefly discuss the indices used to establish social stratification norms within the sample.

The phenomenon of social class usually refers to the individuals' standing in a hierarchy of social positions. Since it is possible to locate some individuals whose general standing in the group is higher or lower than others, those individuals can be identified and classified into normative social classes. A person's hierarchical position within a group is usually derived from his relative social positioning in education, income and occupation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rober H. Koenker, Simplified Statistics (Bloomington, Illinois: McKnight and McKnight Publishing Co., 1961), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup>Irwin J. Sanders, The Community (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1966), pp. 156-164.

TABLE 4.1.1.1  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--LENGTH OF RESIDENCY  
IN YEARS

	0-1	2-3	4-5	6-10	11+	Total
N	0	2	8	8	32	50
%	0	4	16	16	64	100%

TABLE 4.1.1.2  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--EDUCATION

	0-8 yrs.	9-11 yrs.	12 yrs.	Some College	2 yrs. College	4 yrs. College	Total
Highest Level Completed	N	6	15	18	8	1	50
	%	12	30	36	16	2	100%

TABLE 4.1.3

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--OCCUPATIONS

	Housewife Unemployed	Service Worker	Unskilled	Craftsman	Sales	Business Managerial	Professional	Total
N	27	7	5	4	0	5	2	50
%	54	14	10	8	0	10	2	100%

TABLE 4.1.4

## DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--INCOME

	\$0-\$1,999	\$2,000-\$3,999	\$4,000-\$6,999	\$7,000-\$8,999	\$9,000+	Total
N	9	11	14	13	3	50
%	18	22	28	26	6	100%



TABLE 4.1.5  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--NUMBER OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
N	3	12	6	10	12	3	2	2	50
%	6	24	12	20	24	6	4	4	100%

TABLE 4.1.6  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA--NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
N	8	16	7	10	7	0	1	1	50
%	16	32	14	20	14	0	2	2	100%

In the course of the survey interview, each respondent was asked the highest level of formal education attained, his occupation, and his total family income. Information concerning the number of children attending school, dependent children, length of residence in city, sex and family position was obtained also. The measure of social class ranking for respondents was based upon a score derived from combining the individual's education, occupation and income ranking position.<sup>1</sup>

Occupational ranking was classified into seven categories: (1) housewife/unemployment (2) service worker (3) unskilled (4) craftsman (5) sales (6) business or managerial (7) professional.

Educational rank was classified into seven categories: (1) completed eighth grade (2) completed eleventh grade (3) completed twelfth grade (4) some college or specialized training (5) completed two years college (6) completed four years college (7) post graduate study.

Income was classified into five categories:  
(1) less than \$1,999 (2) \$2,000-\$3,999 (3) \$4,000-\$6,999  
(4) \$7,000-\$8,999 (5) more than \$9,000.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>August B. Hollingshead and others, "Social Stratification and Psychiatric Disorders," American Sociological Review, XVIII (April, 1953), pp. 165-166.

<sup>2</sup>Werner S. Landecker, "Class Crystallization and Its Urban Pattern," Social Research (Autumn, 1960), p. 314.

The social rank position for each respondent was established by totaling the rank scores obtained from his occupation, education and income classification. The respondents' social index for these combined rankings (occupation, education and income classifications) ranged from 3.0 to 19.0. The average social index for the sample population was 9.3 (a score derived by totaling the social index scores of each respondent and dividing this sum by the number of respondents in the sample [ $N = 50$ ]).

The data gathered reveals that the typical respondent in this study had lived in the community for more than 10 years, had attended or completed secondary school, was unskilled, earned from \$2,000 to \$9,000 per year, and averaged 3.5 children per family. The data indicated that the intercorrelation for the three variables (income, education and occupation) was positive and significant at the .01 level (Table 4.13).

#### Measure of Respondent Participation

In the course of the survey interview, each respondent was asked how he learned about the educational program in his community. A listing of the most frequently used media for communications was compiled (Table 4.2). Each respondent was asked to indicate its effectiveness in conveying information about the educational program to

TABLE 4.2

MODE OF COMMUNICATION  
(Questionnaire Item 8)

Medium	Least		Some		Most	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Children	1	2	14	28	20	40
Friends and Neighbors	2	4	25	50	6	12
Bulletins	3	6	15	30	13	26
School Organizations	5	10	16	32	12	24
New Haven Register	6	12	18	36	9	18
Face-to-Face	7	14	9	18	18	36
Community Civic Organization	10	20	15	30	9	18
Telephone	6	12	20	40	2	4
Television	7	14	16	32	3	6
Radio	7	14	14	28	4	8
Area Periodicals	13	26	5	10	6	12
New Haven Courier	15	30	4	8	3	6
Other	3	6	0	0	0	0

him. These data provided different responses from similar studies. Boozer<sup>1</sup> reported that 81 per cent of his respondents obtained most of their information through the local press and 46 per cent via television. Sixty-eight per cent of the respondents in this study (Table 4.2) indicated that they obtained some or most of their information about the public schools from their children; the next most important source of information came from friends and neighbors, followed by school organizations and school bulletins. The local newspaper and face-to-face contacts with school officials ranked fifth and sixth respectively in effectiveness for dissemination of educational information. However, these findings do not agree with other data gathered in the survey which suggest that face-to-face contacts most significantly influence the amount and kind of information an individual possesses concerning the educational program.

The table of variable intercorrelation (Table 4.13) indicates a slightly negative (but not significant) correlation between the number of school-age children a respondent may have and the amount of information he possesses. There is, however, a significant positive

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<sup>1</sup>Raymond Boozer, "A Study of the Voting Publics in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Concerning Public School Operating Millage Elections" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1969).

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correlation between the number of contacts with the school and the amount of correct information an individual possesses concerning the educational program. A tabulation of the results of respondents' perception of the effectiveness of a communication media is presented in rank order of effectiveness in Table 4.2.

#### Nature and Degree of Respondent Participation

In this study each respondent was asked to indicate the nature and extent of his involvement in the school's educational program. A variety of reasons for school contact was presented in order to identify existing basic trends for school contact. It cannot be assumed that parents who confine their participation to visiting the school to attend to problems concerning their children will be equally as motivated to participate in adult education programs, to work on a curriculum improvement committee, or to serve on an advisory board.

The test for variable intercorrelations (Table 4.13) supports this statement. In fact, the degree of respondent-school contact is significantly correlated with the respondent's education, occupation and income (S.E.S.) as well as to the extent of communication received concerning the educational program. There is actually a slight negative correlation between the number of

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respondent-school contacts and the number of dependent children that he has.

Table 4.3 shows the nature and degree of the contacts that the respondents have had with the school. This data suggests that the extent and nature of the respondent's desire to participate in school activities is more closely correlated to socio-economic status than to the nature of the activity being sponsored by the school.

#### Respondent Satisfaction Emanating from School Contact

An analysis of the respondent's estimate of the responsiveness of the public school officials to their requests is presented in Table 4.4. Respondents were also asked to indicate the degree of personal satisfaction with the total educational program. These data indicate that while only 8 per cent of the respondents were unsatisfied with the responsiveness of the school officials--more than 4 times as many (38%) were dissatisfied with the total educational program. The majority of respondents indicated varying degrees of satisfaction with the responsiveness of the public school officials and with the educational program in their community.

It can also be noted in Table 4.4 that 72 per cent of the respondents expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the responsiveness of school officials--while

TABLE 4.3

RESPONDENT PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOL ACTIVITIES  
(Questionnaire Items 11-12)

Nature of School Contacts During School Year	0		1-2		3-10		10+	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11. Estimated Total School Visits	4	8	11	22	21	42	14	28
11-a. Estimated Total Telephone Contacts	20	40	15	30	13	26	2	4
12-a. As Member of Official School Organization	27	54	6	12	14	28	3	6
b. Invited to Review Child's Progress by School Officials	19	38	12	24	18	36	1	2
c. Summoned to School Because of Discipline Problem	28	56	12	24	10	20	0	0
d. Visited Voluntarily to Seek Additional Information Concerning Program	11	22	24	48	10	20	5	10
e. Invited as Participant in Special Program	30	60	9	18	9	18	2	4
f. As a Participant in School Sponsored Adult Program	40	80	7	14	2	4	1	2
g. Seeking Assistance from School for Resolution of Personal Problem	46	92	1	2	3	6	0	0

TABLE 4.4

DEGREE OF RESPONDENT SATISFACTION EMANATING FROM SCHOOL CONTACTS  
(Questionnaire Items 14-15)

Area of Satisfaction	Not Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		Satisfied		Very Satisfied		Exceptionally Satisfied		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Responsiveness of School Officials	4	8	8	40	8	16	5	10	3	6	10	20
Neighborhood Educational Program	19	38	16	32	10	20	2	4	0	0	3	6

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only 56 per cent of the respondents expressed some degree of satisfaction with the total educational program. The disproportionate degree of respondent satisfaction between the school unit officials and the total educational program suggests that the respondents feel that many of the problems that exist in the local unit school are beyond the ability of the local officials to rectify. These findings correspond to similar findings of this study (Table 4.9) which indicate that the community feels the central office is indifferent concerning its opinions, while the local unit administrator is concerned and more responsive.

#### Extent of Neighborhood Informal Discussions Relating to Educational Programs

It can be noted in Table 4.5 that 68 per cent of the respondents indicated that they have participated in discussions related to education often or very often. Only 18 per cent of the respondents stated that they rarely or occasionally discussed education with their neighbors.

The table of variable intercorrelations (Table 4.13) indicates a positive significant correlation between communication and the socio-economic status of the respondent. That is to say, the respondent who was most likely to discuss education typically has had more education and has a better job and more income. He also has

TABLE 4.5

RESPONDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT OF THEIR PARTICIPATION  
IN INFORMAL NEIGHBORHOOD DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM  
(Questionnaire Item 13)

Item	Never		Occasionally		Often		Very Often		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
13. Extent of Discussion	2	4	7	14	30	60	4	8	7	14

had more contacts with the school and has learned about school through a wider range of media than those who never or only occasionally discuss education.

Table 4.5 shows the varying degrees of discussion and the percentages of the sample for each category.

Information Possessed by Respondents  
Relating to Educational Program

As part of the basic design of this study, research was conducted to assess the extent of correct information possessed by each respondent in the sample population. Table 4.6 is a compilation of the responses to questions which were selected to measure the general range and depth of the respondent's basic knowledge of New Haven's educational system.

The first question was extremely general and asked the respondent to identify the current superintendent of schools name from a list of five other names of individuals who have been associated with the central office administration. Only 70 per cent of the respondents correctly identified the superintendent's name. Table 4.6 presents the percentage of right and wrong responses to specific questions designed to assess the basic information possessed by the respondents in the sample. It is interesting to note that 72 per cent of the respondents were unaware of the attrition rate for school superintendents.

TABLE 4.6

SURVEY OF SELECTED AREAS OF INFORMATION POSSESSED  
BY RESPONDENTS RELATIVE TO SCHOOL SYSTEM  
(Questionnaire Items 19-20)\*

Information Possessed by Respondent		Right		Wrong	
		N	%	N	%
19.	Current Superintendent of School System	35	70	15	30
20-a.	Availability of Vocational Courses in High Schools	31	62	19	38
b.	Required High School Courses	24	48	26	52
c.	Institutional Responsibility for Supervision and Financing Operation of Local Regional Technical School	28	56	22	44
d.	Provisional of Free Textbooks to Public School Students	41	82	9	18
e.	Duration of Regional Experimental Bussing Programs	41	82	9	18
f.	Appointment of Board of Education Members	22	44	28	56
g.	Source of School Finances	33	66	17	34



TABLE 4.6--Continued

Information Possessed by Respondent	Right		Wrong	
	N	%	N	%
h. Education's Proportional Share of Total City Budget	21	42	29	58
i. Alternatives for School Dropouts	37	74	13	26
j. Teachers' Salary Range	28	56	22	44
k. Availability of Special Programs for Handicapped Children	26	52	24	48
l. Attrition Rate of School Superintendents	14	28	36	72
m. Extent and Cost of School Vandalism	30	60	20	40
n. Board of Education's Policy on its Meetings	34	68	16	32
o. Board of Education's Policy on Citizen Committees	18	36	32	64

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\*Condensed questions. For original questions see Questionnaire, Appendix C.

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Fifty-eight per cent were unaware of what portion of the total city budget is allocated to education. Fifty-six per cent erroneously reported that the superintendent of schools appoints the members of the board of education. In Table 4.13 (Table of Variable Intercorrelation<sup>1</sup>) the data shows that the amount of information possessed by the respondents is significantly correlated (.01 level) to the socio-economic status of the respondent, the amount of communication he receives, and the number of school contacts he has made.

Respondent Attitude Toward Educational  
Programs and Practices

Another segment of the questionnaire sought to identify the respondent's perceptions of the quality of education offered by the New Haven School System with neighboring school systems in the Greater New Haven Metropolitan Area. Each respondent was asked to subjectively compare the New Haven Educational System with other systems with which he was familiar. Sixty per cent of the respondents gave responses which indicated that they felt the quality of education within the system ranged from fair to superior. Thirty-six per cent of the respondents indicated that they considered the quality of education to be poor. Sixty-four per cent of the respondents indicated

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<sup>1</sup>Table 4.13, Intercorrelation Table, p. 116.

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that they considered the New Haven School System to be at least equal to, or superior to, neighboring school systems, and 26 per cent of the respondents indicated that they considered New Haven's School System to be inferior to those of surrounding towns. These data suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that the educational problems that exist within the New Haven School System are generally no different than those that exist in neighboring areas.

It is interesting to note in the Table of Inter-correlation Variables (Table 4.13) that the respondents' estimate of the quality of education being offered in New Haven does not correlate significantly with any of the selected variables. Therefore, these findings can be considered merely as interesting observations rather than significantly related to the findings of this study.

Table 4.7 presents the data relating to respondents' qualitative assessment of the New Haven School System.

#### Respondent's Self-Estimate of Public School Interest

Although this segment of the questionnaire was designed to assess the relative degree of personal interest the respondent exhibited towards the educational program, data gathered here more readily reflects the respondent's

TABLE 4.7  
RESPONDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF COMPARATIVE QUALITY  
OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM  
(Questionnaire Items 21-22)

Item	Poor $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %	Fair $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %	Good $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %	Superior $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %	Excellent $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %	No Response $\frac{\text{N}}{\text{N}}$ %						
21. Quality of Educational Offerings	18	36	21	42	8	16	1	2	0	0	2	4
22. Comparative Ranking With Contiguous Systems	13	26	25	50	7	14	5	10				

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perception of educational interest expressed by others in the community. Eight per cent indicated that they felt less interested in education than other residents of the community. Thirty-six per cent felt they were similarly interested, 48 per cent felt that they were more interested and 8 per cent felt they were exceptionally interested.

These data indicate a general assumption by the majority of respondents that the community is apathetic toward the educational programs being conducted in the system.

Table 4.8 presents the data relating to the respondent's self-estimate of his interest in the educational program.

Respondent's Perception of Lay Citizen  
Current Role in the Educational  
Decision-Making Process

In this section, data are presented which describe the respondent's perception of his ability, opportunity and desire to influence educational policy-making decisions.

It is interesting to note that 74 per cent of the respondents felt that public school officials were unconcerned about the respondents' opinions concerning education, 68 per cent felt that they exerted no influence on educational policy and 60 per cent felt the whole educational process was too complicated and better left to the professional educators to handle.



TABLE 4.8  
RESPONDENTS' SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL INTEREST  
(Questionnaire Item 23)

Item	Less		Similarly		More		Exceptionally	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
23. Self-Estimate of Public School Interest	4	8	18	36	24	48	4	8

Complete data for this section of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.9.

Comparison of Lay Citizens and Professional Educators' Opinions Concerning the Degree of Parental Responsibility in Selected Traditional Educational Tasks<sup>1</sup>

In this section the opinions of lay citizens were compared with those of professional educators to determine the degree of responsibility that each group felt that parents should have. The topic of general educational responsibility was divided into three categories. Each respondent was asked to indicate whether he should have full, shared, or no official responsibility for conducting traditional school educational tasks.

An examination of the data presented in Table 4.10 shows that the majority of respondents desire shared responsibility in each category presented except for the determination of teaching methods. In this category the majority of the respondents indicated that lay citizens should have no responsibility, while professional educators (90%) signified that they should retain sole responsibility for determining teaching tasks.

Only in the areas of determination and supervision of extracurricular activities did lay citizens and

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<sup>1</sup>Data relating to professional educators' opinions were obtained from an N.E.A. conducted Opinion Poll, previously cited in this study.

TABLE 4.9

RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE LAY CITIZEN CURRENT  
ROLE IN THE EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS  
(Questionnaire Item 24)

Degree of Statement Acceptance	Strongly Agree		Agree		Mildly Agree		Mildly Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Public School Officials are Concerned Regard- ing the Educational Opinions of Lay Citizens	6	12	2	4	1	2	16	32	21	42	4	8
b. Working Class Citizens Influence Educational Policy and Programs	8	16	0	0	0	0	20	40	9	18	13	26
c. Public Education is too Complicated to Under- stand and Better Left to the Professionals to Operate	6	12	5	10	0	0	12	24	18	36	9	18

TABLE 4.9--Continued

Degree of Statement Acceptance	Strongly Agree		Agree		Mildly Agree		Mildly Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
d. Lay Citizens are Encouraged to Make Use of the Public Schools	7	14	18	36	1	2	8	16	10	20	6	12
e. Increased Citizen Participation is Needed at the Educational Policy Making Level	23	46	6	12	5	10	0	0	2	4	14	28
f. Increased Citizen Participation Will Resolve Many Current Educational Problems	17	34	7	14	6	12	1	2	3	6	16	32

TABLE 4.10  
A COMPARISON OF LAY CITIZENS' AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS'  
OPINIONS CONCERNING PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN  
SELECTED TRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL TASKS  
(Questionnaire Item 26)

Degree of Parent Educational Responsibility	Full $\frac{\%}{\%}$	Shared $\frac{\%}{\%}$	None $\frac{\%}{\%}$
<u>Selection of Administrators</u>			
Lay Citizens	6.0	60.0	34.0
Professional Educators	3.2	31.7	65.1
<u>Selection of Teachers</u>			
Lay Citizens	6.0	58.0	36.0
Professional Educators	0.3	14.8	84.9
<u>Selection of Textbooks</u>			
Lay Citizens	8.0	64.0	28.0
Professional Educators	0.3	20.9	78.8
<u>Determination of Curricula</u>			
Lay Citizens	8.0	70.0	22.0
Professional Educators	0.4	53.3	46.3

TABLE 4.10--Continued

Degree of Parent Educational Responsibility	Full %	Shared %	None %
<u>Determination of Course Content</u>			
Lay Citizens	8.0	74.0	18.0
Professional Educators	0.3	33.8	65.9
<u>Determination of Teaching Methods</u>			
Lay Citizens	10.0	38.0	52.0
Professional Educators	0.1	9.3	90.6
<u>Determination of Extracurricular Activities</u>			
Lay Citizens	6.0	70.0	24.0
Professional Educators	4.4	78.9	16.7
<u>Supervision of Extracurricular Activities</u>			
Lay Citizens	12.0	62.0	26.0
Professional Educators	7.5	77.2	15.3
<u>Determination of Budget Allocations</u>			
Lay Citizens	6.0	62.0	32.0
Professional Educators	1.2	46.0	52.8

professional educators generally agree on the extent of parental responsibility. The majority of both classifications indicated that responsibility for these two traditionally professional educational tasks should now be shared by lay citizens and professional educators.

In addition to strongly objecting to lay citizen involvement in determining teaching methods, 84.9 per cent of the professional educators objected to parental involvement in the selection of teachers, while 65.1 per cent of the professionals objected to lay citizens selecting their administrators.

Although professional educators overwhelmingly objected to parental involvement in the selection of textbooks, they were not as adamant about parents sharing the determination of curricula, course content, and budget allocation.

While the majority of both groups generally agreed that parents should have some responsibility in carrying out most traditional educational tasks, only a small percentage of teachers and lay citizens indicated that parents should have full responsibility for any of the educational tasks listed.

In the Table of Intercorrelation Variables (Table 4.13) it is noteworthy to mention that there is a slight negative correlation (.05 level) between the length

of residence in the community for the respondent and his expressed desire for responsibility. The longer he resides in a community, the less likely he is to assume more responsibility. It is also important to note that this variable is significantly correlated (.05 level) to the amount of education he has acquired and to the comparative interest expressed in the educational program as a whole.

A complete presentation of the data obtained for comparing the opinions of lay citizens and professional educators relating to the degree of lay citizens involvement in traditional educational tasks is listed in Table 4.10.

Selected Educational Activities in which  
Respondents Indicate a Desire for a  
Greater Participatory Role

The data concerning the interest that parents expressed in selected educational activities is presented in Table 4.11. Although the majority of respondents indicated (Table 4.10) that lay citizens should "share" the responsibility for carrying out traditional educational tasks, only 30 per cent indicated that they would be willing to serve on a school advisory committee if they were given the opportunity to do so. Another 30 per cent indicated that they would like some form of school employment if given the opportunity. Only 8 per cent indicated



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that they were willing to volunteer their services to the school program.

A complete summary of the responses to this section of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.11.

TABLE 4.11

SELECTED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN WHICH  
RESPONDENTS EXPRESS A DESIRE FOR A  
GREATER PARTICIPATORY ROLE  
(Questionnaire Item 17)

Activity	N	%
School Employment	18	36
Recreation	8	16
Adult Education	5	10
Volunteer	4	8
School Committee	15	30
TOTAL	50	100

Selected Educational Activities in  
which Respondents Indicate a Desire  
for More Information

In this section, each respondent was asked to indicate about which of nine educational areas he would be interested in learning more. A summary of the responses is presented in Table 4.12. A comparison of these responses with the data collected for Table 4.6 (Information Possessed by Respondents) reveals that the areas in which

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TABLE 4.12

SELECTED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN WHICH  
RESPONDENTS INDICATE A DESIRE FOR  
MORE INFORMATION  
(Questionnaire Item 16)

Educational Activity	N	%
Educational Research	9	18
Teaching Methods	24	48
School Building Program	10	20
Counseling Program	19	38
School Organization	8	16
Teacher Recruitment	8	16
Teaching of Reading	9	18
School Finance	4	8
Programs for Handicapped	9	18

more information is desired shows little correlation with the areas of the educational program in which they are least knowledgeable. For example, only 18 per cent of the respondents indicated that they wanted more information pertaining to educational research, while 64 per cent of the respondents were unaware that the superintendent's and board of education's policy quite enthusiastically endorsed the concept of citizen advisory boards, whose primary responsibility would be to cooperatively undertake educational research projects and conduct community

surveys. Another example of the counter relationship between knowledge possessed and information desired is in the area of school finance. In this area, merely 18 per cent of the respondents indicated a desire for more information. Table 4.6 presents data which show that 44 per cent of the respondents do not know the teachers' salary-range, 44 per cent do not know that the local board of education does not finance the nearby regional technical school, 58 per cent of the respondents are unaware of the proportionate share of the city budget being spent on education, 40 per cent are unaware of the annual cost of school vandalism and 34 per cent are unaware of the source of school finance.

In the area of school organization, 56 per cent of the respondents erroneously reported that members of the board of education are appointed by the superintendent of schools, while merely 16 per cent indicated an interest in learning more about school organization.

Considerable interest (48 per cent) was shown in learning more about teaching methods and the counseling program. Fifty-two per cent of the respondents incorrectly answered the question dealing with the curriculum and 26 per cent lacked basic knowledge relating to the counseling program.

Table 4.12 presents the complete summary of the data gathered from this section of the questionnaire.

TABLE 4.13  
INTERCORRELATIONS OF SIXTEEN SELECTED DESCRIPTIVE VARIABLES HYPOTHESIZED AS HAVING  
A REGULATORY EFFECT ON THE DEGREE OF LAY CITIZEN PARTICIPATION  
IN THE EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Length of Residence ...	...															
2. Education	-.045	...														
3. Occupation	.023	.462 <sup>§</sup>	...													
4. Income	.203	.536 <sup>§</sup>	.597 <sup>§</sup>	...												
5. Total S.E.S.	.051	.747 <sup>§</sup>	.897 <sup>§</sup>	.808 <sup>§</sup>	...											
6. School Age Children	.130	-.396 <sup>§</sup>	-.060	.012	-.178	...										
7. Dependent Children	-.055	-.216	-.093	.036	-.133	.766 <sup>§</sup>	...									
8. Communication Received	-.161	.547 <sup>§</sup>	.221	.327 <sup>§</sup>	.410 <sup>§</sup>	-.252	-.174	...								
9. School Contacts	.121	.601 <sup>§</sup>	.323 <sup>§</sup>	.357 <sup>§</sup>	.486 <sup>§</sup>	-.296 <sup>§</sup>	-.281	.521 <sup>§</sup>	...							
10. Contact Satisfaction	.102	.149	-.082	-.031	-.001	.036	-.101	-.005	.291 <sup>§</sup>	...						
11. Informal Discussions	-.019	.411 <sup>§</sup>	.397 <sup>§</sup>	.475 <sup>§</sup>	.498 <sup>§</sup>	-.116	-.011	.356 <sup>§</sup>	.458 <sup>§</sup>	-.093	...					
12. Information Possessed	-.009	.330 <sup>§</sup>	.306 <sup>§</sup>	.266	.363 <sup>§</sup>	-.170	-.215	.396 <sup>§</sup>	.569 <sup>§</sup>	.306 <sup>§</sup>	.329 <sup>§</sup>	...				
13. Attitude Towards School	-.381 <sup>§</sup>	.049	-.017	-.349 <sup>§</sup>	-.098	-.143	-.112	-.199	.111	.440 <sup>§</sup>	-.083	.069	...			
14. Comparative Self-Interest	.173	.338 <sup>§</sup>	.262	.116	.292 <sup>§</sup>	-.150	-.295 <sup>§</sup>	.358 <sup>§</sup>	.562 <sup>§</sup>	.450 <sup>§</sup>	.324 <sup>§</sup>	.445 <sup>§</sup>	.118	...		
15. Program Assessment	.012	.031	.090	.015	.053	.078	-.040	.075	.153	.115	-.138	.179	.101	.158	...	
16. Desire for Responsibility	-.301 <sup>§</sup>	.301 <sup>§</sup>	.198	-.036	.218	-.113	-.137	.030	.142	.026	.215	-.117	.086	.280 <sup>§</sup>	.111	...

<sup>§</sup>All absolute values are significant at .354 for  $\alpha = .01$ .

\*All absolute values are significant at .273 for  $\alpha = .05$ .

All correlation coefficients are positive unless otherwise indicated.

Presentation of Hypothesis  
Testing Data

In the first section of this chapter, data were presented relating to the general-overall design of the study, which was to identify variables which exhibit a regulatory influence on lay citizen involvement in the educational program. Data were reported as simple per cents and where appropriate, significant variable intercorrelations were given.

The remainder of this chapter will present data as they specifically relate to the hypothesis presented in Chapter I of this study. Correlations were computed using Pearson Product-Moment Method to show the relatedness of variables stated in the hypothesis. The intercorrelations and their effects upon the hypothesis are presented in the following Tables 4.14-4.19. Data relating to the intercorrelations for all variables tested in this study are presented in Table 4.13.

Hypothesis 1:

A positive correlation exists between social status and the degree of respondent participation in neighborhood school programs.

The data presented in Table 4.14 support Hypothesis 1. As might be expected in minority group neighborhoods, the variables of income and occupation (as components of socio-economic status) do not correlate as highly with participation as does education. However, the correlation coefficients are sufficiently high to denote a positive significant relationship existing between them.

TABLE 4.14

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL CONTACTS AND  
EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, INCOME AND  
TOTAL S.E.S. OF RESPONDENTS\*

Variable	Education	Occupation	Income	Total S.E.S.
Participation (School Contacts)	+.601	+.325	+.357	+.486

\*Each correlation coefficient is significant at .354 for  $\alpha = .01$ .



Hypothesis 2:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in public school programs and the degree of interest and satisfaction developed toward neighborhood school programs.

The data presented in Table 4.15 indicate that a significant correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation and the degree of interest engendered toward the neighborhood school program. The data presented in Table 4.15 support Hypothesis 2.

TABLE 4.15  
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL CONTACTS AND  
INTEREST AND SATISFACTION BY  
RESPONDENTS\*

Variable	Interest	Satisfaction
Participation (School Contacts)	+.562	+.291

\*Correlation coefficients are significant at .354 for  $\alpha = .01$  and at .273 for  $\alpha = .05$ .

Hypothesis 3:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation and the amount of factual knowledge he possesses concerning the public school program.

The correlation coefficient between respondent variables of participation and information possessed is significantly high to indicate a strong relationship between the two. The data presented in Table 4.16 support Hypothesis 3.

TABLE 4.16

CORRELATION BETWEEN SCHOOL CONTACTS AND  
INFORMATION POSSESSED BY RESPONDENTS\*

Variable	Information Possessed
Participation (School Contacts)	+.569

\*Correlation coefficient is significant at .354  
for  $\alpha = .01$ .

Hypothesis 4:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in public school programs and his attitude toward the decision-making processes employed by school officials.

The computed degree of correlation between participation and the respondent's attitude toward the decision-making processes employed by school officials suggests that only a chance relationship exists between the two and therefore is not significant. The data presented in Table 4.17 reject Hypothesis 4.

TABLE 4.17

CORRELATION BETWEEN SCHOOL CONTACTS AND  
RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE  
DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES\*

Variable	Attitude Towards Decision-Making Processes
Participation (School Contacts)	+ .111

\*The correlation coefficient is significant at .273 for  $\alpha = .05$ .

Hypothesis 5:

A positive correlation exists between the degree of respondent participation in public school programs and the amount of communication he receives.

The computed degree of correlation for participation and communication is significantly high to denote a positive significant relationship existing between the two. Therefore, the data presented in Table 4.18 support Hypothesis 5.

TABLE 4.18

CORRELATION BETWEEN SCHOOL CONTACTS AND  
AMOUNT OF COMMUNICATION RECEIVED  
BY RESPONDENTS\*

Variable	Amount of Communication Received
Participation (School Contacts	+.521

\*The correlation coefficient is significant at .354 for  $\alpha = .01$ .

**Hypothesis 6:**

A positive correlation exists between the degree of information possessed by the respondent and the extent of personal interest he manifests toward the educational system.

The computed correlation coefficient for the variables of information possessed and interest exhibited is significantly high to denote a positive, significant relationship existing between the two. The data presented in Table 4.19 support Hypothesis 6.

TABLE 4.19

CORRELATION BETWEEN INTEREST EXHIBITED  
BY RESPONDENTS AND INFORMATION  
POSSESSED BY RESPONDENTS\*

Variables	Information Possessed
Interest Exhibited	+.445

\*The correlation coefficient is significant at .354 for  $\alpha = .01$ .

### Summary

In this chapter, the extent and nature of the channels of communication that exist between Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School and the community which it serves have been presented.

The extent of respondent contacts with the school is quite significantly correlated with the amount of information possessed concerning the school program. Correspondingly, the more information the respondent possesses, the more interest he has in the educational program. These findings suggest that a better informed community is usually more interested in its schools and more likely to become involved in the educational program. The channels of communication between the school and community indicate a wide range of media being used, with each medium employed manifesting varying degrees of effectiveness. The efficacy of communication generally seems to be enhanced by direct verbal and personal contact. Neither written nor mass media forms of communication appeared to yield many results as measured by the amount of information possessed by the respondents.

Although most respondents indicated that they obtained most of their knowledge concerning the educational system from their children, other data gathered in the survey gave little support to this statement. The

correlation between the amount of information possessed and the number of school-age children was not significant. The findings suggest that a slight negative relationship actually exists between these two variables: the more school-age children a respondent has--the less school related information he possesses. Other findings presented in this chapter indicate that the respondents exhibit a greater degree of satisfaction with the professional staff at their neighborhood school than the educational system as a whole. These findings could suggest that the respondents feel that the professional staff members with whom they come into contact with at the school are not directly responsible for the problems which exist there.

Other data gathered in the survey further suggest that education is a frequent topic of discussion in the community. Education tends to be discussed more by those who occupy a higher socio-economic status in the community than by those who occupy the lower strata. The typical "discussion participant" usually has had more contact with the school and utilizes a broader range of media as the source of his knowledge concerning the schools.

The amount of knowledge possessed about the school system by respondents in the sample population was found to be significantly correlated with their socio-economic

status and the degree of participation and interaction they have had with the school's programs. In general the average respondent knew very little about the public schools and was quite reticent to admit his lack of knowledge. However, he is particularly interested in learning more about new educational methods and counseling services.

The respondent's subjective evaluation of the quality of education offered by the system is not significantly influenced by the objective factual knowledge he possesses. Subjective rating of the system was found to be just that--subjective--and unrelated to any identifiable characteristic of the sample population used in this study. These results may very well be a reflection of the lack of knowledge possessed by the respondent concerning the school's programs.

Findings relating to lay citizens' and professional educators' opinions concerning the extent of parental responsibility in assuming traditional educational tasks indicate a wide distribution of conflicting attitudes. Both lay citizens and professional educators generally agreed that parents should assume greater responsibility for nonacademic kinds of tasks. However, professional educators quite clearly indicated their rejection of parents assuming greater responsibility for defining the technical aspects of teaching or classroom activities.



Professional educators were slightly more receptive to the idea of parents assuming greater responsibility in the administrative aspects of education.

The majority of parents indicated a desire for a greater share of the responsibility in each of the selected traditional educational tasks, with the exception of the determination of teaching methods. Only in this category did the majority of the respondents indicate that they should have no official responsibility. On the other hand, 74 per cent of the respondents indicated that parents should "share" official responsibility for determining course content.

A very low percentage of both groups indicated that parents should assume "full" official responsibility for carrying out those traditional educational tasks selected for this study.

The respondents generally felt that the educational system was not too complicated for them to understand and indicated that they wished to assume a greater participatory role in establishing broad educational policies. The data gathered also suggest that the respondents feel unable to influence educational policy through the current organizational structure and wish to become officially identified with the educational program as either an employee of the system or as a member of an official

school committee. A very small percentage of the respondents indicated that they would be willing to "volunteer" their services to the educational program.

The data presented in this chapter support five of the hypotheses that were initially stated in Chapter I of this study. The data indicate that those individuals in this community who are likely to participate in the school's program are usually from a higher socio-economic strata, are interested in education generally, have had positive contacts with the school, are better informed, and communicate through a wide range of media. On the other hand, the respondents were generally unsatisfied with the educational decision-making processes employed by public school officials and were desirous of a greater participatory role in formulating educational policy.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to explore and examine the degree of communication that existed between the residents of a lower socio-economic community and the neighborhood elementary school which their children attend. A structured interview was conducted with a representative sample of the population in order to determine: (1) to what extent do parents from lower socio-economic levels communicate with professional educators and the school; (2) to what extent do parents from lower socio-economic levels participate in the decision-making process of policies that affect their children; (3) what techniques can be employed by professional educators and the school to broaden the areas of communication.

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## Summary

### Extent of Citizen Participation

The data gathered from this study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between the extent of respondent contact with the school and the degree of information he possesses concerning the school program. Correspondingly, the more information he possesses concerning the school program, the more interest he manifests towards the educational program. These findings generally suggest that a better informed community is more interested in its schools and likely to become more involved in its educational programs. A variety of media is employed by professional educators in their attempts to communicate with the lay citizens of the community. The data gathered in carrying out the research for this study strongly suggest that face-to-face or direct verbal contacts is the most effective means of communication.

The research findings also indicate a significant positive relationship existing between the degree of participation exhibited by the respondents and their socio-economic status. That is, those individuals most likely to participate in the school's programs are usually from a higher socio-economic strata, exhibit a general interest in education, have had more positive contacts with the school, and generally communicate through a wider range of

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media. These individuals also express a greater desire to participate in formulating educational policy and are most likely to be those individuals in the community who strongly disapprove of the educational decision-making process currently employed by the public school system.

### Implications for Educators

The data indicate that there is very little agreement between professional educators and lay citizens about the assumption of complete responsibility by either group for selected educational tasks. Professional educators and lay citizens alike indicated that they favored sharing responsibility for most educational tasks. Teachers and parents alike indicated that the technical aspects of teaching should be left to the discretion of the professional educators. Lay citizens indicated conclusively that they were more concerned about the establishment and shaping of educational policy than with the specifics of classroom activity. They also indicated a desire to be involved at varying degrees in all dimensions of the educational process.

Although the data suggested that a large proportion of lay citizens overtly expressed a desire to assume more responsibility for certain educational tasks, other data obtained suggested that lay citizens were not quite

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as willing to assume responsibility on a voluntary basis. These findings suggest that the concept of volunteer service is more characteristic of the middle and upper classes than of the poor.

Broad segments of the community sampled are demanding to have something to say about the educational program in their community. Teachers as well as lay citizens, both the affluent and the less affluent are demanding a part in influencing educational policy. Such involvement does not suggest a lessening of the importance of professional educators, nor does it suggest the abrogation of the responsibility of those legally charged with the administration of the educational programs. On the contrary, strengthening of the relationship between the school and community will result in the assumption of an even greater responsibility for leadership and personal service by professional educators. Increased efforts to develop effective communication systems throughout the community; surveys of community needs and the development of programs based upon those needs; expansion of the schools' programs to include all interested groups, all ages, all socio-economic levels; the extension of the school day; and above all, a concentrated effort to delineate clearly the specific role of each group in the determination of school policy will be required if

increased citizen participation is to result in improving the educational program.

### The Governance of Public Schools

Because education is one of the governmental functions left away from the control of federal government by the designers of the United States Constitution, the responsibility for its control legally resides with the various states. The states in turn have authorized the cities and towns within their jurisdictions to establish local lay citizen boards with these local boards hiring administrative personnel to execute the boards' policy decisions.

Until recently, this form of public school administration has been used almost exclusively in the United States without question. Now, whether the questions are concerned with school decentralization, the hiring or firing of teachers or what is being taught, the American community, from the slums to the suburbs is becoming more involved in public education than ever before.

Responsible boards of education throughout the nation have explored numerous ways in which to provide for broader lay citizen involvement in the formulation of educational policy. Frequently their decision to move in this direction has been prompted by an uncompromising display of consolidated neighborhood or community power.



This power may be either "economic power"; as in communities where millage to finance the operation of the schools is put to a public vote; or by "political power"; where pressure is exhibited at the voting booths. Communities that lack the power to invoke either economic or political sanctions, often employ "other tactics," such as sit-ins, boycotts, or the destruction of school property. These new-found tactics can sometimes be disruptive, are often controversial, and usually effective.

Some boards of education have recommended that their administrators establish formal lay citizen advisory councils as a means of working cooperatively with their constituents, however, these instances are the exception rather than the rule. There are still overwhelming indications that parents in many communities feel isolated from their schools.<sup>1</sup>

When a community holds expectations for the education of its children that are different from those of its professional educators and formulators of educational policy, the question arises as to what alternatives are open to it to share in influencing the educational program. The question becomes especially crucial as the school districts become more homogeneous and the central

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<sup>1</sup>James E. Mauch, "Breaking Tradition Forges School-Community Ties," Phi Delta Kappan, L, No. 5 (1969), pp. 270-274.

boards and professional staff members become more cosmopolitan and, concomitantly, less representative of their constituents.

This investigation reveals that there is an increasing need for better school-community communication and suggests some interesting implications for the traditional structure of public school administration on a national, state and local level. One of the most direct implications inherent in the changing educational scene is that of the relationship between the school unit administrator and the lay citizens of that community.

### Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn from the data collected in this study are as follows:

A very crucial relationship exists between the school and community and the school's responsibility for working cooperatively with the community. The school's *raison d'etre* is to meet this need. There is no influence upon the student as powerful as the influence exerted upon him by the total environment of his community. It is obvious that the school has a responsibility for doing whatever it can to harness the teaching potential of the community if it is to succeed in achieving its goals.

By and large, public schools which are located in poorer communities have not acknowledged their communities

in this sense. Some have tried but failed to involve the community. Those that have tried and failed have cited both the lack of cooperation and apathy on behalf of the community as the reasons. A possible reason for the school's failure may be that they have not developed a sound rationale for involving the community nor have they decided on what should be done and then establish a system for accomplishing it.

The characteristics of school-community relationships differ between socio-economic strata. In most middle-class communities parents will seek out and feel quite comfortable in contacting their child's teacher or school administrator. The feeling of alienation and class difference is reduced or does not exist. Lay citizens and professional educators "speak the same language." In many of these schools, parents and teachers are warm friends, teachers often reside in the community in which they teach, and each holds the opinions of the other in high regard. Teachers and parents work as equal partners to conduct meetings, plan and attend educational lectures, raise funds, assist teachers and to assist in establishing educational priorities. Neither lay citizen nor professional feels threatened by the presence of the other. A positive learning environment exists because the school is "in harmony with" and "meeting the needs of the community."

However, the schools with which this study concerns itself are not located in these kinds of neighborhoods. Professionals and lay citizens have not established these kinds of interdependent relationships and cooperative social behavior. The specific school cited in this study is located in a neighborhood that is characterized by poverty, crowded living conditions, illiteracy, high population turnover and a feeling of alienation from society in general.

The lay citizens of these communities are often suspicious of the schools and professional educators and frequently are fearful and/or hostile toward both. The fear and/or hostility often manifest themselves through attitudes of indifference towards the school and its programs or through overt acts of vandalism, criticism, as well as aggressive behavior towards the professional staff. Behavior of this type toward the school is not uncommon in most lower socio-economic communities. The result may be that many of these schools may not only face the problems posed by a passive interest which may stem from feelings of fear and suspicion, but also face the active interest of parents who are aggressive and hostile toward the school.

The problem for professional educators is not merely one of how to get parents involved and interested,

but how to channel their interest toward constructive ends. Most professional educators do not know how to cope with the militant aggressive behavior of the poor. The need to establish a structure that will enable professional educators and lay citizens to communicate effectively is obvious. To develop this unique structure, the school must devise new procedures for educating and enlisting the cooperation of lay citizens. This does not mean that the school merely replicates the structures designed to facilitate community-school relationships in middle class communities. The fact that children from lower socio-economic communities require more, not merely the same degree of parental support, quite clearly suggests a farther reaching mechanism for achieving this goal. The mechanism must be designed to affect horizontal as well as vertical communication.



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## Recommendations

### Introduction

The researcher assumes that although the purpose of most descriptive studies is to identify and analyze specific problems, the ultimate justification for such a study can only be attained when the findings are applied toward the resolution of the problem being studied. Therefore the researcher will suggest a model which has been designed to improve the process of communication in the New Haven School System.

Van Dalen states:

. . . Descriptive studies supply not only practical information that can be used to justify or improve the immediate situations, but also the factual foundations upon which higher and higher levels of scientific understanding can be built. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It should be remembered that although this study was conducted with a specific community in mind, the sample population is statistically large enough to permit reliable inferences to be made to other communities manifesting similar conditions and characteristics. If the instruments used in this study are to be used in future studies of this nature, they need to be adapted to reflect the distinct characteristics and resources of the community being analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup>Deobold B. Van Dalen, Understanding Educational Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1962), p. 212.

Rationale for Establishing Educational  
Advisory Councils

It would appear that there is very little to be gained from arguing the merits of who should control the school. It should be quite apparent that both lay citizens and professional educators must contribute to the educative process if it is to be successful. Further, the choice of "who should determine" should more or less be based upon the nature of the problem rather than by the position one occupies in the community. This study deals with the problem of "lack of communication between two parts of a system--not the question of "power" or "control" of institutions. It was the intention of the author to analyze the problems of communication that are dictated by a bureaucratic educational structure, and based upon the findings, develop a mechanism to resolve the problems.

Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools,  
Gerald Barbaresi said:

I can't work with the hundreds of groups we have in this city everytime I have a decision to make. It is a physical impossibility. I need a group accepted by various groups to bounce ideas and plans off. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The size and ecological distribution of a community play an important role in determining the effectiveness of

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald Barbaresi, New Haven Evening Register, November 26, 1969.

the structured mechanism for coordinating the interaction of the community to its institutions and vice versa. For this reason, the rationale for decentralization based upon the same criteria as New York, Detroit, Chicago, and other large systems may not be applicable to school systems of smaller sizes. Their attempts to reorganize into smaller autonomous school districts would still leave each school district with more students than are contained in the average school system throughout the country. As pointed out in Chapter II, the administrative structures which have been recommended for these vast school systems differ very little from the type of administrative organizations that presently exist in systems that fall within the 5,000 to 50,000 student range.

New Haven, Connecticut, has a student population of 21,192, which closely approximates the sub-system size that has generally been recommended for larger urban school systems that are undergoing a process of decentralization. This size system has been cited as having numerous advantages for a number of reasons, most of which have been cited earlier in Chapter II.

Citizen involvement is primarily a matter of sharing--not abrogating professional educators' professional and legislative responsibility.

Professional educators must devise ways to share the responsibility of formulating and initiating policy with lay citizens and bring the whole decision-making process closer to these ultimately effected by the policies being established. The common educational structure, the one in which the teacher is responsible to the principal, the principal to a district director, the director to an assistant superintendent, and the assistant superintendent to the superintendent and the superintendent, in turn, to the board of education, may need to be altered. Such a system provides little opportunity for lay citizens to contribute to the formulation of educational policy until policy has already been established. Lay citizens are systematically excluded from direct contact with those who exert the most influence on the establishment of policy.

The author recognizes three levels at which direct lay citizen-professional communication should take place if maximum two-way vertical and horizontal communications is to be achieved.

Three models for the various stages of communications systems are provided on the succeeding pages. Model Number 1 (see Figure 5.1) provides for each unit school to establish its own School Unit Advisory Council. Model Number 2 (see Figure 5.2) provides for each unit

within a geographically defined neighborhood to establish a School District Advisory Council, and Model Number 3 (see Figure 5.3) provides for the establishment of a School System Advisory Council.

#### School Unit Advisory Council

Recently, many professional educators, especially building principals and teachers, have come to recognize that they have a responsibility to serve the needs of the parents and community as well as the children. Citizens have a right and the duty to see to it that the schools become responsive to their requests that quality education be provided in their schools. The unit principal, as the person who represents the central administration in the community must be unencumbered so that he may become more responsive to the immediate needs of the community. He cannot be rendered impotent by a morass of bureaucratic red tape. The decision-making process needs to be brought closer to those affected by the decision--but vis-a-vis those who are legitimately charged with the responsibility and are accountable for the quality of education provided within the school. The unit principal is the capillary between the central administration and the community. He is the one who is charged with the responsibility of translating stated educational goals and policies into action in a specific classroom, and in a specific school.

School Unit Advisory Council  
(Meets Weekly)

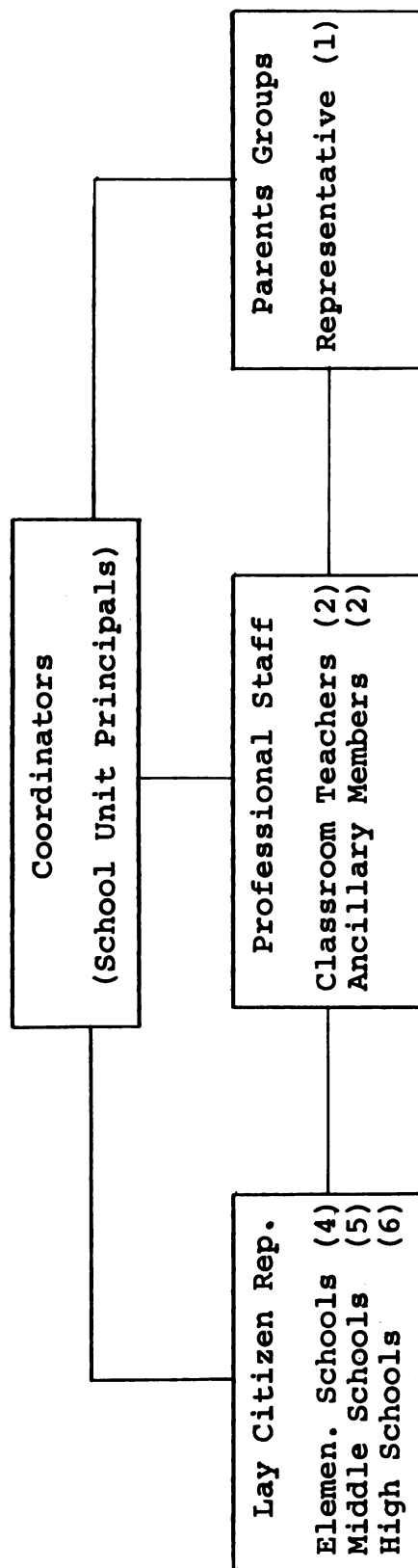


Figure 5.1--Communication Level 1

The flow of two-way communication must be broadened at this level if the community is going to influence the nature and design of educational policy that is ultimately passed down to him to be implemented in his school unit. It is not practical to expect the central office administrative staff to deal effectively and directly with the myriad of problems that emanate daily from the individual communities.

However, many of the decisions now being made on the central office level could be decided at the neighborhood level without adversely effecting the quality of education being provided in the schools. Indeed, the quality of instruction may be enhanced in many instances.

The models for the various dimensions of school-community communication are based upon:

- A. The need for the individual school-communities to establish and maintain dialogue relative to problems that relate to a particular school.
- B. The need for the residents of that school to register their concerns relating to the system as a whole and thereby influence school policy.
- C. The need to bring the best of both environments--the school and the community--to bear upon the educative process of the student.

The primary functions of the School-Community Advisory Councils will be to hear the problems of the school and to assist in developing means to resolve them; to convey to school personnel the problems, needs,



resources and aspirations of the community; and in general to interpret to the community the program achievement and needs of the school.

Composition of School Unit Advisory Council  
(Meets Weekly)

I. Administrative Representation  
Coordinator--(Principal)

- A. Number:  
One (1) at each school
- B. Definition:  
Administrator of school, the person who is primarily responsible for the overall operation of the school.
- C. Duties:  
Chairman (first year)
  - 1. Exercises voting privileges, coordinator of other voting segments.
  - 2. Convenes initial meeting, assists membership in selecting officers and establishing by-laws, approves weekly agenda.
  - 3. Brings issues of special importance to the attention of Level 2 communications coordinator and superordinates.
  - 4. Provides opportunity for and helps to propagate leadership from within the councils.
  - 5. Culls out superfluous educational jargon from educational documents, translates into laymen's terms and disseminates information from central office to council members.
  - 6. Provides leadership to help his council succeed in reaching its stated objectives.
  - 7. Consults with advisory board prior to initiating new school policies.

8. Maintains copies of minutes and records of Councils.
9. Meets weekly with Advisory Councils.
10. The principal should listen actively to Council's deliberations and recommendations and should be expected at times to bring these to the attention of higher authorities if they cannot be handled at the unit level.

## II. Parents' Association Representation

The School Unit Advisory Council should not replace the currently recognized parents' association of the school. This plan envisages an even greater role for the parents' association. The representative of the parents' association should have the responsibility of functioning as liaison between the parent body of the school and the Advisory Council. He will be able to report the Council's activities to all parents of the school and, even more importantly, to serve as a sounding board to the Council by conveying to the committee the attitudes and reactions expressed by the parents.

### A. Number:

One (1) at each school

### B. Definition:

Current parents' association representative. President or his delegate becomes a voting member of the Advisory Council.

### C. Duties:

1. Reports issues of special concern to Advisory Council and vice versa.
2. Provides functional services to educational program and Advisory Council, i.e. graduation, special holiday programs, fund raising, assumes special tasks as may be designated by Advisory Councils.
3. Meets weekly with Advisory Councils.



### III. Lay Citizen Representation

- A. Number: (see below)  
Four (4) elementary school  
Five (5) intermediate school  
Six (6) high school (at least two of whom must be parents)
- B. Definition:
1. May be either parent, student, nonparent adult resident, or employee of the community.<sup>1</sup>
  2. Exact composition of this segment is to be determined by unit principal for the first year of the council.
  3. All members vote.
- C. Duties:
1. One of the most valuable functions an Advisory Council can perform, is to systematically gather facts about its community--its health, human relations, educational, recreational, economic and welfare needs.
  2. Assists in interpreting these research findings to the professional staff.
  3. Assists in evaluating teaching methods and materials.
  4. Assists in evaluating student achievement.
  5. Suggests and helps to develop new teaching techniques and materials.
  6. Establishes and sustains dialogue with other institutions of the community.
  7. Serves as resource personnel for professional educators.

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<sup>1</sup>Level 2 Communications Representative from each Level 1 Advisory Unit must be a lay citizen.

8. Works on special committees as designated by Advisory Council, i.e., prevention of school vandalism, establishing hot lunch programs, curriculum committees, bussing programs, drug addiction, etc.
9. Establishes, strengthens and sustains (in conjunction with other council members) a fluid two-way channel of communication between school and community by such communication techniques as: arranging public meetings and forums; maintaining a speakers bureau; assisting in creating a community-school newspaper; initiating inservice workshops and training programs; preparing news releases to be used on radio, television, and newspaper; making special efforts to contact and involve new and non-English speaking families.
10. Assists in identifying, recruiting and interviewing indigenous members of the community for school employment.
11. Works with area colleges and school system to establish areas of career ladder employment for "community interns."
12. Works with student groups to create a greater interest in their school such as: student government, extracurricular activities, etc.
13. Participates in the redress of parent and community grievances involving the school.
14. Works jointly with school personnel in the evaluation and revision of existing or proposed systems for reporting student academic and social progress, especially with school guidance personnel.
15. Reviews and familiarize themselves with existing or proposed school policies, programs.
16. Participates as the consultive community body in the assessment of, and recommendation for, any major school building construction, repair, or remodeling.

17. Meets weekly with Level 1 Advisory Council.
18. If selected, serves as the representative to Level 2 Advisory Council.
19. Keeps himself well-informed by studying and reading about new educational developments.

#### IV. Professional Staff Representation

A. Number:  
Four (4) (at least two of whom must be classroom teachers)

B. Definition:

1. Any school employee under the direct supervision of the unit principal.
2. May be either classroom teachers, para-professionals, ancillary staff personnel, itinerant teachers, or custodial staff members.
3. All members vote.

C. Duties:

1. Interprets new teaching methods and materials to Advisory Council.
2. Reports special concerns of Advisory Council to professional staff and vice versa.
3. Helps to develop new teaching methods and materials for problems identified by Advisory Council.
4. Works on special committees as deemed necessary by Advisory Council.
5. Serves as a resource person to lay citizens of the Advisory Council.
6. Meets weekly with the Council.

School District Advisory Council

The primary function of Advisory Council at Communications Level 2, is to identify educational problems that are reflected in a broader segment of the community than those that have been identified at the school unit level. A council at this level can serve the purpose of identifying broad educational trends, attitudes, and defining the extent and range of individual neighborhood problems or resources. The Level 2 council may assist in resolving educational problems that cannot be solved at the school unit level.

The New Haven School System has designated seven schools to serve the system as community schools. Each of these schools is located near the center of seven characteristically identifiable communities, and each contains a relatively equal number of students and community resources. Each community school unit is uniquely staffed with an expanded administrative team which has been appointed primarily on the basis of its proven capacity to work effectively with the residents and institutions within its community. The geographic location of these schools, their modified and flexible schedules, as well as their competent staffing, suggests that they are ideally suited to be designated as the schools to coordinate and expedite the flow of communications at Level 2.

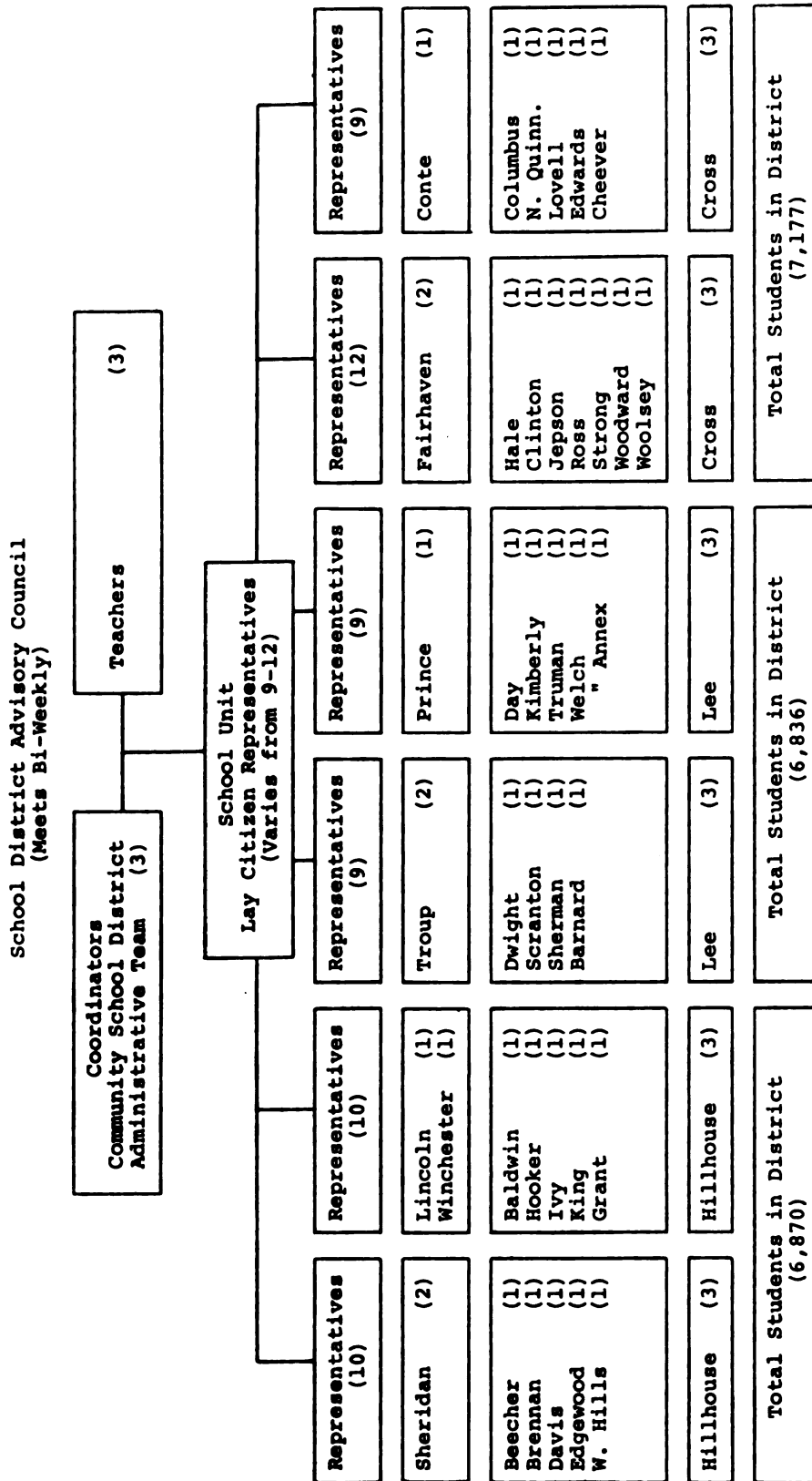


Figure 5.2--Communication Level 2



The task of bringing people of varying cultural backgrounds, experiences and abilities together as a smoothly functioning adjunct to the educational institution is an extremely delicate and complex process. If not carried out with a minimum of friction between the parties involved, irreparable harm can be done that would tend to exacerbate an already tenuous relationship. As stated earlier, the question of "who should determine" should be decided by the nature of the problem. Unfortunately, human relations skills are not possessed by all professional educators in equal quantities.

Advisory Councils at Level 2 should be comprised of the most competent lay citizen representatives from the Communications Level 1 Council. Each District Council would consist of not less than 9 nor more than 12 representatives, thereby providing an organization that is not so large that it discourages or restricts meaningful communication, or so small that it fails to provide sufficient cross section of community opinion and members necessary to carry out council work.

This organizational structure permits the Level 2 council-of-the-whole to have lay citizen representation from the various grade levels. Although this structure may provide excellent opportunities to assess community opinion relative to the overall educational program, it

is expected that the council will establish committees to deal with issues relating to specific grade levels. This organizational structure also makes it possible for parents to continue to actively participate on the Advisory Council.

Composition of School District Advisory Council  
(Meets Bi-Weekly)

- I. Administrative Representation
  - Coordinator (Principal, or either of two assistant principals)
  - A. Number:
    - Administrators, three (3)
  - B. Definition:
    - Principal, assistant principal or community school coordinator
  - C. Duties:
    - 1. Chairman (first year)
    - 2. Exercises voting privileges.
    - 3. Convenes initial meeting, assists membership in selecting officers and establishing by-laws.
    - 4. Brings issues of special importance to the attention of superordinates, other institutions, and educational components, as well as to the Advisory Council itself.
    - 5. Provides opportunity for, and helps to develop leadership skills from within the committee.
    - 6. When necessary, culls out superfluous educational jargon from documents and disseminates essential information to council.

7. Provides leadership when necessary to help Council achieve its stated goals.
8. Helps Council to identify and articulate central issues.
9. Approves agenda for Council meetings.
10. Brings resources at his disposal to Council.
11. Maintains copies of Council minutes and records.
12. Meets bi-weekly with Council.
13. Serves as a resource to Council.

## II. Professional Staff Representation

### A. Number:

Three (3) (at least one of whom must be a classroom teacher).

### B. Definition:

1. Any school employee under the direct supervision of the unit principal.
2. May be either classroom teachers, para professional, ancillary staff personnel, itinerant teachers or custodial staff members.
3. All members vote.

### C. Duties:

1. Interprets new teaching methods and materials.
2. Interpret issues relating to teacher contract.
3. Reports special concerns of Advisory Council to teaching staff and vice versa.
4. Helps to develop new teaching methods and materials for problems identified by Advisory Council.

5. Works on special committees as deemed necessary by the Advisory Council.
6. Serves as resource personnel to lay citizens of Council.
7. Meets weekly with Council.

### III. Lay Citizen Representation

- A. Number:  
(See Figure 5.2 for specific assignment and number of representatives.)
  1. One (1) from each elementary unit.
  2. Two (2) from each intermediate unit.
  3. Total of six (6) from each high school from which three are to be assigned to specified district Advisory Council (see Figure 5.2).
- B. Definition: Lay citizens--parent, student, adult, nonparent resident, employed in the community and duly elected to Level 2 by Level 1, lay citizen representatives.
- C. Duties:
  1. Present issues of special concern to unit councils.
  2. Help identify common educational problems.
  3. Conduct research and community surveys.
  4. Assume special assignments as deemed necessary by Council, i.e. visit and report on programs in other school systems; serve as resource personnel to professional educators.
  5. Assist in interpreting central board policy to Communications Level 1 Unit Council.
  6. Assist professional educators in establishing district educational priorities and long range goals.

7. Report back to Communication Level 1 Unit Councils on special issues of concern to the district.
8. Establish, strengthen and maintain (in conjunction with other council members) a fluid two-way channel of communication between the school-community and other institutions located within the district.
9. Develop a more in-depth knowledge of educational procedures by studying and reviewing available literature.
10. Serve on Communications Level 3 Advisory Board if selected.
11. Meet bi-weekly with Level 2 Advisory Board.

#### School System Advisory Council

Communication between professional educators and lay citizens must occur on a higher level than Level 1 and 2 if educational policy is to be significantly influenced by lay citizens. Level 3 corresponds to the central administrative staff of the educational system. It is at this level that board policy is interpreted and implemented. It is at this level that plans are made, ideas hatched, and priorities established before presentation to the central board for approval. However, it is exactly at this level where lay citizens have the least contact with professional educators. For this reason, the superintendent of schools has developed an administrative cabinet with which he meets regularly. Prior to making a decision he often uses the cabinet to test ideas and to

School System Advisory Council  
(Meets Monthly)

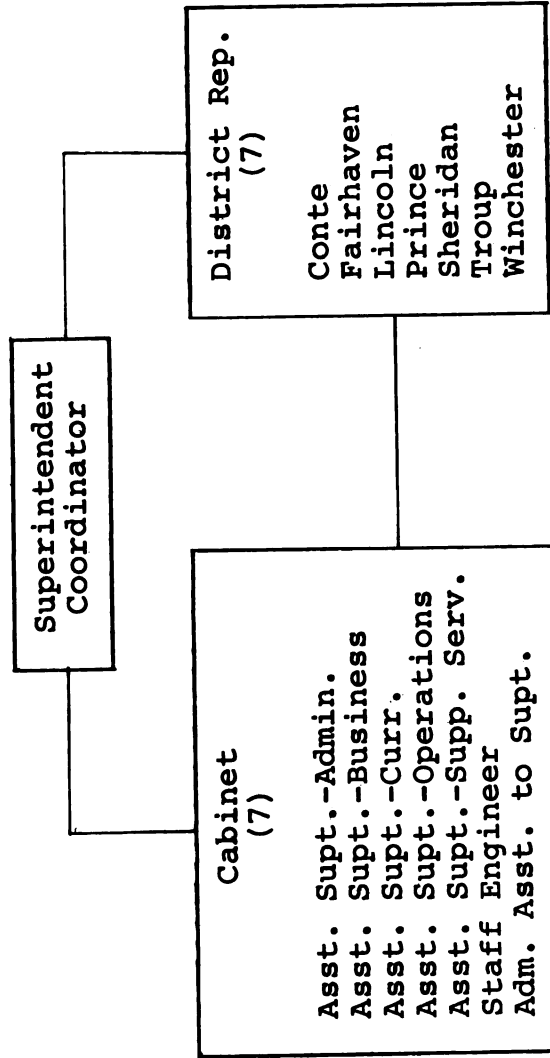


Figure 5.3--Communication Level 3

obtain information from each cabinet member about the cabinet member's special ideas of responsibility. Usually the information provided is only remotely based upon first hand knowledge of the programs and problems existing in the community. Therefore, the recommendations to the central board are spawned primarily from the perspectives of the professional educator. Presently lay citizens have the opportunity to present their opinions directly to the central board of education. However, it is usually only after decisions have been made and the program initiated that lay citizens become aware that the board of education has contemplated establishing new educational policy. Moreover, the board has traditionally approved and supported the recommendations of its superintendents.

The current superintendent of schools has expressed a desire to create "a sounding board of lay citizens." Obviously, this is a recognition of the need to seek lay citizen opinion before educational policy is established and introduced. However, other high ranking administrators exert influence on educational policy and more importantly, are responsible for interpreting the intent and nature of newly established policy to their subordinates. Systematic face-to-face contact between lay citizens and the educational hierarchy could provide valuable insights into the many ramifications of educational decisions for both parties.

The primary functions of the advisory committee at Communications Level 3 would be to discuss the broader educational issues with the central office administrative staff that could not be resolved at Level 1 or 2. It would provide lay citizens with the opportunity to direct questions to members of the central office staff relating to their area of responsibility, thereby serving as a capillary for information between the lay citizens of their respective districts and the central administrative staff. They could assist in helping to establish educational priorities, mobilizing community support for educational initiatives and provide the very crucial elements of citizen support and involvement.

Composition of School System Advisory Council  
(Meets Monthly)

- I. Central Office Representation:  
Superintendent (coordinator) and his cabinet
  - A. Number:  
Eight (8)
  - B. Definition:  
Chairman--superintendent--voting member  
Cabinet--voting members
  - C. Duties: Superintendent
    - 1. Convenes meeting
    - 2. Uses Council as a sounding board for reaction to proposed programs.
    - 3. Approves agenda.



4. Helps Council identify central issues.
5. Interprets board of education policy to Council.
6. Brings issues raised before Advisory Council to the attention of the central board of education.
7. Allows information gathered to influence decision.
8. Maintains records and minutes of meetings.

D. Administrative Cabinet Member

1. Meets monthly with Level 3 Advisory Council.
2. Votes on issues brought before Council.
3. Seeks out answers to questions or problems raised by Council.
4. Researches areas of concerns brought before Council.
5. Is prepared to speak knowledgeably about various programs under his supervision.
6. Continues to broaden knowledge about various educational functions under his supervision.
7. Earnestly seeks opinions of lay citizens concerning programs under his supervision.

II. Lay Citizen Representation:

- A. Number:  
Seven (7) one from each district
- B. Definition:  
Student, parent, adult nonparent resident employed in the community and duly elected to Level 3 by district 2 lay citizen representatives.



C. Duties:

1. Meets monthly with Level 3 Advisory Council.
2. Brings issues raised at Level 2 to attention of Council.
3. Prepares himself to speak knowledgeably about issues he brings before Council.
4. Reports back to the lay citizens of his community.
5. Serves as resource personnel and on special committees as deemed necessary by the Council.
6. Respects confidences of Council.
7. Undertakes research projects and surveys as deemed necessary by the Council.

Recommendations for Implementation of  
Advisory Councils

This proposal should be disseminated to all parties seriously concerned about citizen participation--the central board of education, assistant superintendents, district directors, supervisors, principals, parents organizations, community organizations, community action groups, and others.

Soon thereafter, the principal of each unit school should call an organizational meeting to which he would invite representatives of the central board of education, parents' associations, teaching and supervisory staff, directors, political representatives, etc.

Each unit principal should provide an opportunity for those in attendance to discuss the purpose and function

of the school unit Advisory Council, its size and composition, as well as the responsibilities of the specific representative segments. Several meetings may be necessary to accomplish this. It would be desirable to have those in attendance present varying points of view. The lay citizenry in attendance at the initial meeting should determine the best procedure for selecting its representatives to the council. The representative of the parent's group and the school representative should determine the process for selecting their representatives to the Advisory Council also.

The principal may advise as to the details involved in organizing the council such as: the designing of an appropriate council, discussion of Federal, State and City educational principles and policies. Each Advisory Council should adopt a set of by-laws or guidelines that is consistent with the central board of education policies for the functioning of its councils. All meetings should be open to the public.

When, after a reasonable period of time, a principal fails to establish a representative Advisory Council either because of lack of administrative assistance, human relations skills, or personal apathy towards such councils, the Director of Community Schools should direct the District Community School Principal to contact

the residents in the unrepresented community and with the assistance of other community agencies, assist them in organizing their Advisory Council.

### Concluding Statement

Genuine belief in the principle of school-community involvement dictates that specific and detailed ways for its implementation must be determined by the individual school community. The question of the individual's relationship to his public institutions is one of the most pressing matters facing society today. The quality of the relationship between the school and community is determined in large measure by the extent of effective communications that can be achieved between the two.

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## **APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE TO PAST AND PRESENT  
PRINCIPALS OF KATHERINE A. BRENNAN  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As you probably know, I am currently conducting a survey to assess the current extent of lay citizen participation in the operation of the New Haven Public School System. Because of its geographic location and the current demand for a greater participatory role in the educational programs of Katherine A. Brennan, the residents of Brookside-Rockview Public Housing Project have been selected as the sample population of the survey.

A greater participatory role for lay citizens is not only an imminent possibility--but a desirable educational objective as well. Data gathered from this survey will be most valuable in helping define which areas of our educational program lend themselves to more meaningful citizen participation. It then becomes the responsibility of professional educators to see to it that the role--when established--is constructive and supportive of the overall purposes and goals of public education.

There are several dimensions of a community that no questionnaire can adequately measure. Your past experience and day-to-day contact with the parents and children of Brookside-Rockview Public Housing Project have undoubtedly familiarized you with: the social organization; life style; resources and aspirations of the community. I would like your objective impressions of the community in the above mentioned areas.

Your responses of course will be held in strictest confidence.

Please give a brief response to each item on the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the self-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

George D. Harris Jr.

GH:gh

## KATHERINE A. BRENNAN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____	Dates of administrative service at Katherine A. Brennan _____
Total number of years as a professional educator _____	Total number of years as an educational administrator _____

(Please give brief statement for each item and return questionnaire in self-addressed envelope)

1. In your opinion, what community groups (or individuals are representative of the community? What is the informal social structure?
2. Which community groups (or individuals) in the Brookside-Rockview neighborhood have consistently expressed an interest in the educational program at Katherine A. Brennan?
3. List some of the long-standing major educational problems emanating from the community--of which you were aware--but unable to resolve to the satisfaction of the Brookside-Rockview community.

(Go on to next page)



4. List some of the things you did as an administrator at Katherine A. Brennan which were specifically designed to bring about greater school/community interaction and communications.
5. As an administrator, what obstacles impeded your attempts to improve school/community relations at Katherine A. Brennan?
6. What are your recommendations for improving school/community relationships in the Brookside-Rockview school district?
7. Please write on the back of this form any information that you consider pertinent to this study--but not asked for on this questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

George D. Harris  
Ass't Supt./Supportive Services

## **APPENDIX B**

### **LETTER AND SAMPLE RESPONSES TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As part of a graduate research project, I plan to review a number of public school system citizen-participation projects currently in effect or being contemplated for urban communities.

Since it is well known that your school system has already taken steps to facilitate citizen-participation, your experience and knowledge of this topic would be of invaluable assistance to me. I am especially interested in the organizational structure that you have developed to facilitate communication and/or citizen participation. Any pertinent material or information concerning this aspect of your program would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to know the recommendations and suggestions resulting from this study, please indicate so by sending me your name and address and a copy will be mailed to you upon its completion.

Sincerely,

George D. Harris Jr.

GH:gh

**NORMAN DRACHLER**

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS CENTER-5057 WOODWARD AVENUE

DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202

September 15, 1969

Mr. George D. Harris  
Coordinator, Level I  
Mott Institute for Community Improvement  
College of Education  
517 Erickson Hall  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Mr. Harris:

Although Detroit still has far to go in order to achieve the kind of citizen-participation projects necessary for more effective education - we have made a good start.

Beginning with the Citizens Advisory Committee on Education in 1957, headed by the former Governor George Romney, Detroit has during the past decade continued to involve citizen-participation following the aforementioned citizens' report in 1958.

In 1961, the Board of Education appointed a Citizens Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity which was headed by Judge Nathan Kaufman and submitted many important recommendations concerning staff integration, desegregation, community participation, etc. In 1963 there was also an Audit Committee composed of citizens to evaluate our school building program.

In 1966 the Board of Education appointed the High School Study Commission which consisted of 22 teams composed of citizens and students for each high school and an overall city-wide High School Commission. Each team evaluated its own high school and made recommendations for improvement. The Commission reported in June of 1968 with over 200 recommendations pertaining to high schools.

In each of the above commissions, the Board selected citizens who represented all walks of life in our community

Mr. George D. Harris

-2-

September 15, 1969

and reflected viewpoints which served to develop administrative and board policy. One outgrowth of the original 1957 Committee was the development of a project advisory committee for each school building that was to be constructed. This committee consists of citizens in the proposed school area who together with the architect and school staff develop the educational specifications for the proposed building. During the past ten years some two to three thousand citizens were involved in this effort.

In the past two years we have also established the Miller Advisory Project for five inner city schools and the Neighborhood Educational Center; also, for schools in the inner city. Both of these projects were financed - the former under Section IV of the State of Michigan; the latter under Title III, of the Federal Government.

I am forwarding your letter to Dr. Louis Monacel, Assistant Superintendent in charge of State and Federal Projects, who undoubtedly will be able to provide you with additional materials pertaining to the partnership in these two projects, as well as in some other Title I areas.

As you know, we are now working on the whole challenge of decentralization. We hope within the next year to develop guidelines for our local boards throughout the city.

If I can be of any further help, or if you wish copies of the above-mentioned reports, please let me know.

Sincerely,

*Norman Drachler*

Norman Drachler

el

cc: Dr. Louis Monacel



# DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND FISCAL PLANNING

## OFFICE OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, COORDINATION, DISSEMINATION  
5057 WOODWARD DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48202 PHONE 313/833-7900

October 8, 1969

Mr. George E. Harris  
Coordinator, Level I  
Mott Institute for Community Improvement  
College of Education  
517 Erickson Hall  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Mr. Harris:

In a recent letter to Dr. Drachler you had requested some information about the plan to implement an organizational structure for citizen participation in the affairs of the Detroit Public Schools.

The public position of the Board of Education is documented in minutes of the Board and speaks to the broad issues of citizen participation. The minutes are available for examination. The legislation, recently passed, is also very general in nature, leaving broad, sweeping discretionary powers to the central Board.

To meet the terms of that legislation, the Board of Education will soon be establishing committees to begin developing the implementation plan for creating the intimate structure of the operational plan, but as of this date nothing has been developed for discussion at the Board meetings.

Of secondary importance is a plan for citizen participation as presently in operation in the Neighborhood Education Center complex, which is funded by a Title III grant. A copy of that plan is attached. Just how it will fit in with the new plan is not certain.

The Special Projects Division has other models of citizen participation through the Great Cities project which provides participation in two ways: (a) The establishment of a committee of neighborhood people to participate in the hiring of teacher aides in each school. (A copy of the teacher aide agreement describing the community organization is attached.)

LOUIS D. MONAGEL, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

WILLIAM SIMMONS, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

CHARLES J. WOLFE, EXECUTIVE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT NORMAN DRACHLER, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION: PETER F. GRYLLS JAMES A. HATHAWAY PATRICK A. McDONALD ANDREW W. PERDUE  
REMUS S. ROBINSON, M.D. REV. BARNEAU STEWART A. L. ZWERDLING

Mr. George D. Harris

-2-

October 8, 1969


(b) The Great Cities project also provides for the establishment of a committee composed of teachers, citizens and pupils to assist in the development of the curriculum for the extended school program.

Another example of citizen involvement is in the Model Neighborhood Agency. Model Neighborhood is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and has awarded a \$22,000,000 grant to the City of Detroit. The educational component of that grant is \$4,000,000. The Model Neighborhood Agency has an elaborate system of citizen participation, beginning with a 120 man governing board. Each sub-community elects representatives to the Board and these elected representatives comprise the membership of 10 standing committees. It is a very interesting project. I would suggest, if you want more information, that you contact Mr. David Cason, Director of the Model Neighborhood Agency, 415 Brainard, Detroit 48202.

In brief, these are Detroit's major efforts in the area of citizen participation. We think they represent a considerable investment of staff time and energy devoted to the principle that citizens should be directly involved. Nearly all of the 30 special projects have some provision for direct interaction with citizens' groups.

If you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to ask for information.

Sincerely,

  
Richard Kirk  
Assistant to  
Dr. Monacel

RK:bh

Encl.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**



An Instrument Designed to  
EVALUATE THE EXTENT OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS  
AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE COMMUNITY TOWARD THE SCHOOL

Developed by

George D. Harris Jr., Assistant Superintendent  
New Haven Public Schools  
New Haven, Connecticut

October, 1969

SURVEY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY  
COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN A SELECTED NEW HAVEN  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Parent:

In our continuous effort to improve communications and the relationship between each school and the community which it serves, it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of the channels of communication that exist. Please answer each question as briefly and as objectively as possible. The data collected in this interview will be treated confidentially.

PART I. INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

1. Male\_\_\_, female\_\_\_, head of household Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_.
2. Please check the number of years you have resided in New Haven.  
(1)\_\_\_less than one year (2)\_\_\_2-3 years (3)\_\_\_4-5 years  
(4)\_\_\_6-10 years (5)\_\_\_more than 10 years.
3. Please check the highest level of schooling that you have completed.  
(1)\_\_\_less than grade 8 (2)\_\_\_grade 9-11 (3)\_\_\_high school  
(4)\_\_\_some college or specialized training  
(5)\_\_\_two years of college (6)\_\_\_four years of college  
(7)\_\_\_more than four years of college.
4. Please check one of the following groups that best identifies your current occupation.  
(1)\_\_\_housewife (2)\_\_\_unemployed (3)\_\_\_service worker  
(4)\_\_\_unskilled laborer (5)\_\_\_craftsman or foreman  
(6)\_\_\_sales (7)\_\_\_business or managerial (8)\_\_\_professional  
(9)\_\_\_other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Check Income:  
(1) Less than \$1,999\_\_\_, (2) \$2,000-\$3,999\_\_\_,  
(3) \$4,000-\$6,999\_\_\_, (4) \$7,000-\$8,999\_\_\_,  
(5) more than \$9,000\_\_\_.

6.          Number of dependent children living with you.
7.          Number of children presently attending New Haven Public Schools.

PART II. COMMUNICATION ABOUT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

8. We would like to know how you learn about the public schools in New Haven. For each type of communication listed, please check the column which shows how much it has helped you learn about the public schools.

Method of Communication	Least (0)	Some (1)	Most (2)
Face-to-face contact with school officials			
Phone conversation with school officials			
Children			
School bulletins			
Friends and neighbors			
Community organizations			
Programs in schools (including PTA)			
New Haven Evening Register			
Journal Courier			
Area Periodicals: A.I.M. C.P.I. New Letter, <u>et al.</u>			
Radio			
Television			
Other (specify)			

9. Have you heard anything bad about the local public schools lately? Yes \_\_. No \_\_. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Have you heard anything good about the local public schools lately? Yes \_\_. No \_\_. If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

PART III. PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOL AFFAIRS

11. How often did you contact the school by phone to talk with teachers or other school officials?  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten (3) \_\_ more than ten.
12. How often did you visit the public schools in New Haven or attend public school functions last year?  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten times (3) \_\_ more than ten times.
- A. If so, under what circumstances did you attend?  
 (Check more than one answer if appropriate)
- a. As a member of an official school committee or organization.  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten (3) \_\_ more than ten.
  - b. Invited to visit by teacher or administrator to review child's progress.  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten (3) \_\_ more than ten.
  - c. Summoned to school because of a problem concerning your child.  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten (3) \_\_ more than ten.
  - d. Visited voluntarily to obtain more information concerning school programs.  
 (0) \_\_ not at all (1) \_\_ one or two times  
 (2) \_\_ three to ten (3) \_\_ more than ten.

- [illegible]

17. Please check the school activities you desire to take part in if given the opportunity to do so:
- a. Public school employment ☐
  - b. Evening recreation ☐
  - c. Evening high school ☐
  - d. Volunteer classroom worker ☐
  - e. PTA, neighborhood school committee, etc. ☐
  - f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
18. What people, civic groups, or other organizations in New Haven do you feel have the best interests of the children at heart when they speak of public education?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

PART IV. INFORMATION POSSESSED CONCERNING THE NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

19. Please check the name of the person who you believe is the present superintendent of the public schools.
- (1) ☐ George Barbarito (2) ☐ Gerald Barbaresi
  - (3) ☐ Arnold Epstein (4) ☐ Orville Sweeting
  - (5) ☐ Lawrence Garfinkel.
20. Please answer the following statements in the space provided by placing a check after true or false.
- a. Vocational educational courses are available to students in our local high schools.  
True ☐. False ☐.
  - b. United States History is a required course for all high school students in our local public high schools.  
True ☐. False ☐.
  - c. The Eli Whitney Regional Technical School is financed and operated by the New Haven Board of Education.  
True ☐. False ☐.
  - d. Textbooks are provided free to all students attending public schools in New Haven.  
True ☐. False ☐.

- e. New Haven children are being bussed to suburban school systems for the first time this year.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- f. The Superintendent of Schools appoints the members of the New Haven Board of Education.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- g. City property tax money is the only source of financial revenue used to operate the New Haven Public Schools.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- h. Less than ten per cent of the total city budget is spent on public education.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- i. Students that drop out of school may not be readmitted.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- j. A classroom teacher's salary ranges from a minimum of \$9,000.00 to a maximum of \$18,000.00  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- k. The New Haven school system presently offers special programs which are specifically designed to educate the physically and emotionally handicapped child.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- l. The New Haven School System has appointed five school superintendents within the past ten years.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- m. The board of education spends enough money because of vandalism each year to hire five additional teachers.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- n. Lay citizens of the community are not allowed to attend Board of Education meetings.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.
- o. The Superintendent of Schools and the New Haven Board of Education have enthusiastically endorsed the formation of Citizen Advisory Committees for each neighborhood school.  
True\_\_\_. False\_\_\_.

PART V. FEELING TOWARD THE NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

21. How good a job do you feel the public schools are doing in educating New Haven children?  
 (0)   poor (1)   fair (2)   good (3)   very good  
 (4)   exceptional.
22. Compared to other school systems, how good a job do you think the local public schools are doing?  
 (0)   poor (1)   fair (2)   good (3)   very good  
 (4)   exceptional.
23. Compared with other people whom you know, how interested are you in the local public schools?  
 (0)   not interested (1)   less interested  
 (2)   about the same (3)   more interested  
 (4)   exceptionally interested.
24. Please check to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:
  - a. Public school officials are concerned about the educational opinions of lay citizens.  
 (0)   strongly disagree (1)   mildly disagree  
 (2)   mildly agree (3)   agree (4)   strongly agree.
  - b. Working class citizens can influence the direction of the educational policy.  
 (0)   strongly disagree (1)   mildly disagree  
 (2)   mildly agree (3)   agree (4)   strongly agree.
  - c. Our public educational system is too complex for me to understand.  
 (0)   strongly disagree (1)   mildly disagree  
 (2)   mildly agree (3)   agree (4)   strongly agree.
  - d. Citizens of all ages are encouraged to use the local public schools.  
 (0)   strongly disagree (1)   mildly disagree  
 (2)   mildly agree (3)   agree (4)   strongly agree.
  - e. Increased citizen participation is necessary at the policy-making level.  
 (0)   strongly agree (1)   agree (2)   mildly agree  
 (3)   mildly disagree (4)   strongly disagree.
  - f. Increased citizen participation will resolve many of the problems of public education.  
 (0)   strongly agree (1)   agree (2)   mildly agree  
 (3)   mildly disagree (4)   strongly disagree.



25. Please finish the following statements in any way you wish:

a. The New Haven Public Schools are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. I would like the New Haven Public Schools to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

26. Do you believe that a representative group of parents from the school neighborhood should have full responsibility, responsibility shared with professional educators, or no official responsibility for the following educational tasks?

Please check:

Parent Responsibility	Full	Shared	None
Selection of administrators			
Selection of teachers			
Selection of textbooks			
Determination of curriculum offerings			
Determination of course content			
Teaching methods			
Determination of student extracurricular activities			
Supervision of student extracurricular activities			
Determination of school budget allocations			

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. The data collected from this survey will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of our present methods of communicating with parents of the community. Your suggestions of how we may establish closer school-community relationships will be of invaluable assistance in enabling professional educators to move in the direction of greater citizen participation in the operation of the schools.

Sincerely,

George D. Harris  
Ass't Supt./Supportive Services

Please write any additional comments that you would like to make about local public schools in the space below:

---

**APPENDIX D**

**LETTER AND RESPONSE FROM NEW HAVEN  
PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The New Haven Public School System is currently conducting a survey to assess how effective we have been in involving the lay citizens of the community in the educative process. Residents of the Brookside-Rockview Public Housing Project have been selected as the sample population for the survey. Data gathered from this survey will be most valuable to us in helping define which areas of the educational program that lay citizens can most meaningfully participate.

Because of its geographic location, the Brookside-Rockview Public Housing Project obviously affords many advantages for this type of study.

We would appreciate any information you can provide us which may help identify the socio-economic characteristics of the overall population of the project. Our records only reflect the socio-economic characteristics of those residents that have children attending the Katherine A. Brennan Elementary School. Any information you can provide relative to special community concerns other than the educational programs would be appreciated also.

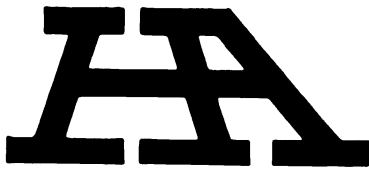
Should the need arise for us to assist you in any way, we hope you won't hesitate to call upon us. A summary report of this study and subsequent recommendations based upon it will be forwarded to you upon its completion.

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

George D. Harris Jr.  
Assistant Superintendent  
New Haven Public Schools

GH:gh



# Housing Authority of the City of New Haven

230 Ashmun Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 • 777-7631

Mrs. Sherwin Casher  
Chairman  
Albert Rogers  
Vice Chairman  
Melvin J. Adams  
Mrs. John Moorer  
Dominick Panagrossi

Edward White, Jr.  
Executive Director

December 22, 1969

Mott Institute for Community Improvement  
College of Education  
517 Erickson Hall  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Attention: George Harris  
Assistant Superintendent  
New Haven Public Schools

Dear Mr. Harris:

In response to your request, the following are some facts re the socio-economic characteristics of the Brookside-Rockview community, along with the enclosed statistical breakdown.

Rockview is a federally-assisted, low income housing project while Brookside is state-assisted moderate income housing. Naturally, the difference in income requirements for the two projects is reflected in the statistics on single-parent families and proportion of population receiving full or partial assistance.

The main concerns of the community outside the area of education are development of adequate recreational facilities for youngsters, including daycare centers and teen lounges; attracting more business services to the immediate neighborhood; and the creation of new housing in the unpopulated areas surrounding the projects. In addition, many residents and potential residents feel the need for more roads connecting the area with other neighborhoods, and improved public transportation.

The enclosed statistics are largely self-explanatory. "Poverty families" are families whose income falls below the federally-established poverty level.

Please contact me again if I can be of further assistance.

Very truly yours,

*Edward White, Jr.*  
Edward White, Jr.  
Executive Director

pb

**APPENDIX E**

**MAP DEPICTING RELATIVE LOCATION OF  
BROOKSIDE-ROCKVIEW PUBLIC  
HOUSING PROJECT**









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